AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

William Ashbrook's *Donizetti and his Operas* was published in 1982.

Derek Beales is Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge and his books include *England and Italy, 1859–60*, 1961.

Antony Beevor's most recent novel is *The Faustian Pact*, 1983.

Philippa Berry is a lecturer in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

Harold Blakemore is Secretary of the Institute of Latin American Studies at London University.

Alan Brownjohn's *Collected Poems* was published in 1983.

Hugh Brogan's *History of the United States of America* will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.

Raymond Carr's books include *Modern Spain*, 1980.

James Campbell's *Invisible Country: A journey through Scotland* was published last year.

Stefan Collini is co-author, with Donald Winch and John Burrow, of *That Noble Science of Politics: A study in nineteenth-century intellectual history*, which was published in 1983.

Patricia Craig is working on a study of Northern Irish poetry and fiction.

J. Mordaunt Crook's *The Dilemma of Style: English architecture from the Picturesque to the Modern Movement* will be published next year.

Tim Dooley's collection of poems, *The Interrupted Dream*, will be published later this year.

Alistair Elliot's annotated edition of Virgil's *Georgics* was published in 1981.

Celina Fox is Keeper of Paintings, Prints and Drawings at the Museum of London.

Roy Fuller's *New and Collected Poems 1934–84* will be published next month.

P. A. Ginsborg is a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge.

Christopher Hawtree is preparing an edition of the magazine *Night and Day*.

J. E. S. Hayward is Professor of Politics at the University of Hull.

Christopher Hitchens is Washington columnist for the *Nation*.

Mick Imlah is the editor of *Poetry Review*.

David Kimbell's *Verdi in the Age of Italian Romanticism* will be reissued in paperback later this year.

Adam Mars-Jones is the editor of *Mae West is Dead: Recent lesbian and gay fiction*, 1983.

R. D. Martin is the author of *The Study of Prosimian Behaviour*, 1979.

John Mole's most recent collection of poems, *In and Out of the Apple*, appeared in 1984.

Blake Morrison's collection of poems, *Dark Glasses*, was published in 1984.

J. B. Paul teaches Political Science at the University of New South Wales.

J. C. A. Rathmell is a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge.

Sonya Rudikoff is completing a book on Virginia Woolf.

Philip Thody's books include *Roland Barthes: A conservative estimate*, 1977, and *Dog Days in Babel*, 1979.

Dennis Walder's *Athol Fugard* was published last year.

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill is a lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Leicester.

Andrew Wawn is a lecturer in English at the University of Leeds.

Stanley Wells's *Re-Editing Shakespeare for the Modern Reader* appeared in August 1984.

Christopher Wintle is a lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths' College, London, and a member of the Editorial Board of *Music Analysis*.

H. R. Woudhuysen is a lecturer in English at University College London.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 225

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than May 31. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that day, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 225" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on June 7.

1 The art of preparing good, wholesome, palatable soups, without great expense, which is so well understood in France, and in other countries where they form part of the daily food of all classes of the people, has hitherto been very much neglected in England; yet it really presents no difficulties which a little practice, and the most common degree of care, will not readily overcome; and we strongly recommend increased attention to it.

2 Sherry is a good addition, but should be used in cooking with the utmost discretion; it is vain to think that the addition of a large glass of poor sherry to the contents of a tin of soup is going to disguise it.

3 In France it is not unusual for some man in the family not only to be interested in the menu and the cooking but occasionally to wish to supervise or even cook a dish. This raises the standard of cooking in the home, the mistress is spurred to greater effort by a constant gentle criticism.

Competition No 221

Winner: William Palmer

Answers:

1 Therefore, to test his patience –
How much he can endure –
Mention no places, names, or dates,
And evermore be sure
Throughout the poem to be found
Consistently obscure.

Lewis Carroll, "Poeta fit non nascitur" from *Phantasmagoria*.

2 "His Excellency's poetry is mainly enigmatic" –
The reply of the interpreter, for the Chinese Ambassador,
To Robert Browning. The Chinese Ambassador
Being, as the interpreter had explained,
A considerable poet in his own language.

John Heath-Stubbs, "His Excellency's Poetry".

3 In poetry they must be allowed to excel all other mortals; wherein the justness of their similes, and the minuteness, as well as the exactness of their descriptions, are indeed inimitable. Their verses abound very much in both of these, and usually contain either some exalted notions of friendship and benevolence, or the praises of those who were victors in races, and other bodily exercises.

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, part iv, chapter 7.

FIFTY YEARS ON

The TLS *of May 9, 1935 carried a review by Douglas Jay of* Economics in Practice *by A. C. Pigou, from which these extracts are taken:*

There is no economist of higher scientific standing than Professor Pigou, in this country or any other. but it is seldom that he forsakes the austere regions of high theory for the jungle of popular controversy . . . . Perhaps the most interesting chapter of all is that on "State action and laissez-faire." . . . Professor Pigou has no sympathy with the eccentric belief, now fashionable, that it is in the public interest actually to promote monopolies. Almost the only reason for doing so, he shows, is to contract industries where surplus capacity exists. But this implies that other industries should be expanded; so that the advocacy of such a policy in general is plainly self-contradictory. Professor Pigou aptly quotes Adam Smith's shrewd and singularly prophetic remark: "People of the same trade seldom meet together even for merriment or diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public or in some contrivance to raise prices." Lastly, any State intervention which reduces the inequality of incomes has a very strong claim to consideration "in making distribution more even." Professor Pigou writes: "There is a wide field for State planning."

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TLS
The Times Literary Supplement

FRIDAY 17 MAY 1985 No 4,285 70p

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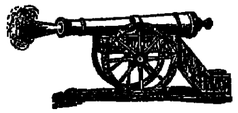

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In the evanescent mode

Patrice and Margaret Higonnet

ISABELLE DE CHARRIÈRE/BELLE DE ZUYLEN
Oeuvres complètes, Tome 6: Correspondance 1800–1805
Edited by Jean-Daniel Candaux and others
1,099pp. Amsterdam: Van Oorschot/Geneva: Slatkine. 60Sw fr.
90282050 63

ALIX DEGUISE
Trois Femmes: Le monde de Madame de Charrière
233pp. Geneva: Slatkine.
205100319 X

Roland Mortier, the doyen of eighteenth-century studies, has described Isabelle Van Zuylen de Charrière as the most remarkable and productive *épistolière* of her century. Her incisive sensibility and comic gifts also make her one of the first novelists of her age, a French Jane Austen. She was, in more ways than one, a rival to Mme de Staël. Like her collaborator Benjamin Constant, the object of their contention, Charrière combined a sharp alertness to social hypocrisy with an ironic self-division or *dédoublement*. Born a Dutch aristocrat at Zuylen near Utrecht in 1740, she died in 1805 at Colombier, near Neuchatel, where she had settled in 1761 with her husband, Charles de Charrière de Penthaz, an intelligent, sensitive, but unimpassioned and mathematically inclined Swiss gentleman, who had served as her brother's tutor. Bookish, self-disciplined, ambitious, she wrote indefatigably, rather to her own surprise: "J'ai peur de devenir un *scribbler* de profession, une sorte de maniaque à plume et à encre."

She was among the most underrated of major writers and only one of her novels, *Caliste*, attracted significant attention in her lifetime. Half of her work (she also wrote plays, opera libretti and tracts) remained in manuscript until the publication of the ten volumes or 8,000 pages of the *Oeuvres complètes*. The remarkable late letters now complete this handsome edition, which was subsidized by Prince Bernhardt and should incite even his harshest critics to indulgence. The innumerable oddities of her spelling, punctuation and language are scrupulously reproduced here, and every reference – with the odd exception, like an allusion to *Pompey the Little* – has been meticulously explained and indexed by an international team of scholars headed by Jean-Daniel Candaux.

Well-born, rather rich, and extraordinarily intelligent, Isabelle was avidly courted, among others by Boswell, who did not propose but felt obliged to explain why he could not do so: "She is a charming creature. But she is a savante and a bel esprit, and has published some things. She is much my superior. One does not like that." Had she greater control over her own feelings, he feared, "She would have unlimited dominion over men, and would overthrow the dignity of the male sex." She sat for Houdon and Quentin de la Tour. Either Mozart or Salieri might well, she thought, write the music for her opera, *Les Phéniciennes*. (In the end, Zingarelli got the job.) Determined to secure citizenship in the republic of letters, she met Hume in London, and while in Paris discussed Molière and Rousseau with Diderot. Though she was interested in German letters (she read Goethe, Schiller and Kant) England, where she spent some months, was her second home. Her sustained interest in Robertson, Ferguson, Smith and Godwin marks her political outlook. She was of course familiar with fiction like that of Sterne and Richardson, translated Fanny Inchbald's Godwinian novel, *Nature and Art*, and even began a fragmentary English narrative of her own.

From a contemporary perspective, the most striking aspect of her life and letters is her relentless determination to define her own situation and that of the world at large within the tensions of the "masculine" and "feminine". Her work has only now come into its own: certain books, she writes, are "like letters written to comrades with unknown names in unknown places". In her youthful self-portrait as "Zélide", she laments the "triste contradiction" between her mind and the inclinations of the heart: "With less sensitivity", she wrote of herself, "[Zélide] would have had the soul of a great man. With less wit and reason she would have been no more than a very weak woman." Madame de Staël was accused of having the vices of men, but Charrière had, as it were, their intellectual virtues. "You are not the first to regret that I am not a man; I myself have often done so. I would be less out of place than I now appear; my situation would lend greater liberty to my tastes; a robust body would better serve an active mind."

With great clarity she perceived the feminine, like the masculine, and for that matter social class, to be social or even political constructs, what she calls the work of Pygmalion: "Le roturier invente le noble tel que vous vous le représentez. L'homme invente la femme. Puis on s'agenouille dévant une chimère de sa propre invention." The construction of gender is the drama of her fiction, as its deconstruction is that of her letters. The minds of women are like the minds of men. The only sound reason not to seat women in Parliament, Lord C admits in *Sir Walter Finch*, is that they would displace the men. It is the mis-education of women that constrains them to the realm of sentiment, "the only university women attend". "Habit", laziness, the lack of work and application, cause most of the differences in ability among men: "The inferiority almost always visible in the wittiest women compared to a witty man has no other cause." The social order is like a goldfish-bowl in which women swim, rather poorly, while they are observed: "A hand feeds them, but the space within which they live is narrow and their movements are constrained, their existence sad." Women read by fits and starts; they cannot apply themselves to major tasks – no surprise, she adds, since they are taught to focus on small detail and to accommodate interruptions gracefully. In effect, women pay, as she puts it, for their freedom from painful work. Men, too, are corrupted by these relationships which turn partners into dependants: "Les hommes, nos souverains, nos maîtres sont aveuglés & conduits par ce qu'il y a de moins estimable parmi leurs esclaves les femmes."

Inevitably, the proper education of women preoccupies her. She derides male satisfaction with the womanly arts of submission, their cultivation of an apparently placid femininity which disguises the skills that threaten. Women's performances, she thinks, bring them perilously close to the slave-market, as in the fate of Caliste, sold by her mother after her performance in *The Fair Penitent*. (Typical of Charrière's relentless mind is her realization that parents "traffic" in the marriages not just of their daughters but of their sons as well: "A man is a piece of merchandise.") Childless, she repeatedly took young women (Henriette l'Hardy, Marianne Ustrich, Isabelle de Gélieu, Thérèse Forster) under her wing, even into her household, to teach them moral independence as well as a "lucrative vocation". Women even more than men need to earn their way: she keeps on a pregnant unmarried maid (to the indignation of the local worthies) because Henriette's next stop would have been the brothel. The concern for some alternative "lucrative vocation" stems from Charrière's realization that economic as well as legal dependence constrains the lives of women, and reinforces the social inferiority which is made their second nature. "If I were queen, I would still teach my daughters a profession, yes surely . . . I would want them to be able to earn money." In the same vein, she admires women who spend decisively to acquire castles of their own. She teaches her wards languages (French, English, Italian), and those letters in which she continues her "mentorat" insist on correct, elegant writing and logical thinking. Hers must surely have been the only Swiss household where the maid read Locke. She boldly pursues principles to their logical conclusions: one of her characters proposes a female military draft, unisex clothing and admission of women to all professions.

Isolation, alienation and self-doubt were, as one might expect, the lot of this wilful woman (Roussean's friend Du Peyrou once wrote to her, "Vous êtes une mule"). To D'Hermenches she declared, "Je voudrais être du pays de tout le monde", but she chose to withdraw from Paris and the Hague, where she could have lived, to a rural suburb of Neuchâtel. She was, in her own words, a "femme changeante, étrangère partout". The balance of her thought depended upon her "precarious" perch, "detached from everything". If her detachment enhanced her skill as a critical artist, it also removed her from the world and even time. Because she saw so clearly, she could not accept a clear and simple answer, "& je ne désire rien avec vivacité". This line of thought leads her to Roman stoicism and an unusual concern with death and suicide. Precisely because Constant was so much like her, a "chameleon", subject to "cynique indifférence", to "turpe torpeur", as she reproached him, their liaison was her most significant effort to break out of this mould.

Appropriately enough, the pangs of their rupture tell us as much about their relationship as the letters of their closest years: "These are not marital quarrels, nor those of lovers" – how can they hurt so much? she asks. Though he was only twenty when they met and she forty-seven, in Constant's words, "les rapports et les convenances n'ont point d'âge". "No one could appreciate you, love you, desire you more than myself", he assured her in 1790. Precisely because fate had so sharply separated

Watteau's Seated Young Woman from Margaret Morgan Grasselli and Pierre Rosenberg's Watteau 1684–1721 *(580pp. National Gallery of Art, Washington; distributed by the University of Chicago Press. £36.75. 0 79468 074 9).*

their paths, they could release their most dangerous thoughts and feelings. Her letters to him more than any others expose her acute disillusionment and spleen.

Brilliantly precocious, multilingual, extravagantly protean and sensitive yet bitterly disillusioned about himself as well as society, of the Enlightenment but not in it, Constant was for this homeless wanderer a perfect companion: "vous et moi," she wrote to him after their break, "nous n'étions d'aucun pays quand nous étions ensemble". At Colombier, these two lovers in all but actual fact worked together, side by side on their own projects, she on her novels, and Constant on the notes for a history of religions which he took down on the back of tarot cards, strung end to end. They also wrote together a fragment, heretofore unpublished, *Les Lettres de d'Arsillié fils*, that forms the bridge between her *Caliste* and his *Adolphe*.

His decision to follow Mme de Staël to Paris in 1794–5 was a frightful blow. Charrière despised the "amphigory" and "frenetic exaltation" of her fellow novelist, rudely rejected her advances, and labelled her "an entirely factitious being". Constant's decision to seek his fortune in Revolutionary politics hurt her more than she had thought possible. She rejected his excuses as mere defences: "my vanity plays no role in the matter. It is my heart, my *humeur*, a forced, involuntary appreciation of you and your conduct that have done all." Although they would later be partly reconciled, Constant now became hostile in turn, signing "Adieu ma laconique, conseillante, et aristocratique amie. Salut et fraternité", in a letter dated 26 fructidor. She unfairly chose to interpret as rank opportunism his efforts to make some sense of a Revolution that had gone mad: "I do not like your kind of life, your friends, or your politics." She saw that he now wished to silence; to lead and not to follow: "I can see that you did not intend to impose silence on me & yet I do not know how you could do so better if you had wished it." She preferred a clean break to the correspondence that he proposed: "tous les objects", she wrote to him mockingly in *franglais*, "resteroient désormais untouched uncontrouled & vous relisheriez en plein le plaisir de vouloir ce que vous voulez".

Disappointed in her relations to a male-dominated world, surprised by the small impact of her work ("Why aren't people talking about *Finch*?"), Charrière fell back on a small circle of young women to defend herself against "le Canker worm". Her letters to them startle by the vivid trace of her sensuality, her pleasure in her own body. Zélide, she wrote in her self-portrait, "has beautiful breasts . . . knows it, and displays them more than modesty would permit . . . . Zélide is rather voluptuous." She repeatedly discusses menstruation in her letters ("It is annoying for a day or two at most, and those women whom it does not make ill are not troubled at all"). Her persistent interest in cures as well as her brief recourse to opium suggest an obsession with her body as well as a desire for control, and it is significant, as Alix Deguise points out, that medical recipes occupy much space in her correspondence with her women friends. Though most women were functionally illiterate and boring since made trivial, female friendship was crucial to her. She regretted not having a daughter and remembered with some longing her proximity to her mother. Revealingly, Constant was the most "feminine" of her male friends in his sense of social oppression and the burdens of the body. Her thinking on this, as so often, is symmetrical: her male characters, like her heroines, find their lives mapped by the constraints of paternal interdiction and friendships with their own sex.

Insights that today could be called feminist are framed and rendered problematic by Charrière's fatalism. Jean Starobinski has described her sense of resignation to social norms as "hyperconformisme". Simone de Beauvoir laments Charrière's "smothered fire", her isolation from intellectual contacts and self-repression as "one of the most flagrant condemnations of the institution of marriage in all of history". Many of her heroines accept defeat, and Charrière herself invoked scepticism and fatalism to rationalize political non-involvement and social conformity: "I have no systems", she told Constant d'Hermenches, Benjamin's uncle; "they serve, I think, only to mislead methodically." Most embarrassing to students of her work is the letter of 1798 to Frédéric César de la Harpe, which defends virtual representation on the grounds that the advocacy of women's rights by their husbands is good enough.

But there is more to this resignation than meets the eye. Charrière *is* a conformist, but one who also thinks like Miss Mennet, one of her fictional heroines, that "sensible women do not at all ask for submission, they only want not be submitted in turn. Equality is their goal." One can detect in her work an unconscious strategy of feminine resistance. Hyperconformity, like Lucretia's suicide, expresses rage and exhorts to revolt. Charrière recommends submission, but only as the one dignified alternative to the display of one's pain. This same contradiction of a woman both resigned and rebellious typically structures her novels. "Ai-je eu tort?" asks Mistress Henley. "Aurois-je eu encore tort, toujours tort, tort en tout?" "C'est fait", says Caliste on parting from her irresolute lover, but her resignation triggers shock and dismay. Constance, one of the heroines of *Les Trois Femmes*, explains that she respects social convention "even to the point of submitting to laws sanctioned by nothing", but the obvious literary effect of so clearly marked a moral gap between oppressive society and the percipient but bowed woman is to stimulate the reader to question that "arrangement", to consider alternatives.

What appears to be explicit conservatism in her world-view must often be understood as an implicit assertion of individualism where it is least acknowledged. Charrière does reject the slogans of the Revolution, but because they are mere lures that permit manipulation of uninformed masses and muffle the actuality of poverty: "Those who desire the welfare of *the people* and do not care about the welfare of some individuals among the people seem to me hypocrites or fools." The French Revolution

could, she thought, twist the wills even of adamant individualists like Constant: "he writes of hatred without hating, and . . . about terrorism without wishing the death even of a fly". She persisted in the defence of property rights (and Swiss neutrality) because she believed that individual property was a necessary defence against the anarchic tyranny of force. Revolutionary zeal when set against the hierarchies of the *ancien régime* seemed desirable. Yet in the context of terrorism and evident anti-feminism, Jacobinism could only repel. Herself an émigrée in inner exile, she felt an affinity for the victims of the Revolution, for a black domestic stranded in Lausanne, or for helpless girls victimized by their masters' licentiousness.

Charrière's political credentials may still appear uncertain, but the significance of her work to contemporary feminist literary theory is undeniable. "Décousu" and "anecdotique" are the recurrent terms she used to describe her "bagatelles" – her conversation, her letters and her narratives. "J'écris *at random*", she boasts. To Constant she writes flippantly, "Until now, I have written novels without an ending; I could print one with neither ending nor beginning." Madame de Staël, her *ennemie intime*, was not convinced: "Nothing could be more painful than your way of beginning without ending." Charrière's whole *oeuvre* hinges on the violation of narrative logic, on her sense of writing out of the emotions and thoughts of the present. Her intuitive pursuit of the curves of her thought gives to her work a rare immediacy. It is in her letters that this evanescent quality appears most tellingly. Her heroines write, as Starobinski has put it, "à la limite du rien". They are driven to write about "nothing", assemblages of things so little that they bore, confuse and baffle the writer herself. This nothingness sets them, indeed, at the brink of "le néant". In *Les Trois Femmes*, Constance, as she starts to tell her story, forestalls criticism by saying that the release of her repressed memories must be tumultuous and disordered. Further, the fragments Charrière wrote corresponded to her sense of the shape of life. Explaining to Constant why she could not finish the double story of Cécile and Caliste, she asked where she was to recover the faith that "marriage can be a sweet, tender and strong link, instead of a rough, heavy and yet fragile chain?"

According to a conventional hierarchy of genres, Charrière wrote in a minor key – letters, novelettes or pamphlets. She herself felt her works were married; it is better, she writes, to be a *Maler* than a *Malerin* who paints unsatisfactory "little miniature portraits". But from the perspective of contemporary feminist theory, the ruptures and discontinuities that bind her works ("my letters are . . . little books in manuscript") contribute to the shaping of a new, perhaps feminine, mode. Charrière's disclaimers resemble the traditional defence, traced by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, of woman writers who have chosen not to be judged by canonical norms. Her "failures" can even be seen as successes now that some modern woman writers have repeated this strategy with a difference – for them, the acanonical becomes defiant; what was "feminine" by default becomes "feminine" by deliberate affirmation.

More radical yet is her deliberate experimentation with notions of causality and historical significance. Charrière rejects monolithic causality and multiplies the contributing factors. Her "fatalism" is both social and psychological in its coloration. In 1795, she explained to her friend Chambrier d'Oleyres that her idea of necessity, of "the eternal linkage of causes and effects which began for us at our birth", includes our particular experiences, inculcated notions of duty, fears and hopes, and even our sensitivity to the feelings of others. Readers of Carol Gilligan's thesis about women's contextual moral judgment will not be surprised at Charrière's critique of Kant, which Alix Deguise so ably describes in one of the most useful books to have appeared about Charrière: "Nothing is general for individuals . . . To grasp the truth, you must always look at particular cases."

Just as she complicates causality, she resists resolutions; like a chess-player, she explores a range of possible outcomes. This intensely intellectual woman pursued in detail the varied consequences of ideas in a correspondence, with Constant especially, that often seems a form of mental combat. Her novels are open-ended, a stratagem that forces the reader to draw conclusions: when silence follows Mistress Henley's despairing announcement that she is pregnant, the reader must ask whether it is psychologically and socially more plausible that she will manage to adapt to her husband's repressive reasonableness, die in childbirth, or simply wither under his indifference.

She sees the parallels between the "non-historical" and the historical. The everyday texture of life has an important place in her work, but as part of the fabric of history. Without exception her novels are set within years or even months of their composition. Through politicization she rejuvenates devices of romance, such as children who are confused at birth. She takes advantage of the social upheaval of the Revolution to speculate about the lives of women thrust into independence by loss of fortune, family or rank. Writing in English, she speculates on what we might call the phallogocentrism of Western European culture as an ideological source of oppression:

> The white European does not include the black African in his idea of human Society: to us a turk slave does not belong to it, no more does the inhabitant of the american forests. What is it then? a word that we respect as it . . . conveys to us the confuse [*sic*] idea of an *arrangement* by which our habits may remain unchanged, our possessions uninvaded, our ideas and prejudices sheltered from the trouble of re-examination . . . . The number of sufferers so large, that of enjoyers so small.

What is the harm? she asks, if human society totters or governments fall – "'tis a mere word."

Just as she oscillates between rage and conformity, so does she move from the abstract to the wonderfully particular. Sainte-Beuve's characterization of her work as Dutch genre painting is very apt. Her novels, but above all her letters, especially in Volumes Five and Six of this collection, have a stunning forthrightness and presence: "My precision about dates, distances, localities, will I hope give this work the air of an anecdote rather than a novel." Her double focus exposes the daily lives of women caught up in the abstractions of a masculine society. Stylistically she recreates these tensions: her "Lettres écrites de Lausanne" are spiked with savoury Vaudois turns of phrase, but she strives also for a naked style, clear, elegant and unornamented, without softening touches. Rousseau, Pascal and Boileau are her models: "I can only go straight and brusquely to my goal."

The most striking contribution of this edition must then be its presentation of the six volumes of her correspondence, more than half of it unpublished, much of it addressed to her young female friends. These 2,552 letters display her best qualities, and bring to mind Friedrich Schlegel's definition of a fragment, prickly and self-contained as a hedgehog. Charrière was fully on the mark when she insisted on the ties between her letters and her novels. She often compares her letters to a conversation, and her novels valorize, as Joan Stewart has suggested, the private world of meditation and domestic chats.

A cosmopolitan whose home was nowhere, she was a writer whose presence in her texts was also ironic removal. "Sometimes I am like a port, a market, with ideas arriving and leaving." She sensed the theatrical and novelistic side of life. She teases a friend, "[Your life is] like a novel that is standing still". In her last letter, dictated as it happens to Constant, she observed her own death with the same "naked brevity" that he had complained about years ago: "It seems to me that I am dying; my friends deny it because I do not feel any killing pain." Constant must have understood the hidden reproach of her last words: "l'extinction de vie me paroit être la mort".

The Ballad of the Imam and the Shah

An Old Persian Legend

It started with a stabbing at a well
Below the minarets of Isfahan.
The widow took her son to see them kill
The officer who'd murdered her old man.
The child looked up and saw the hangman's work –
The man who'd killed his father swinging high.
The mother said: 'My child, now be at peace.
The wolf has had the fruits of all his crime.'

From calumny to calumny to spite
From felony to felony to crime
From mystery to mystery to fate
From destiny to destiny to doom

All this was many centuries ago –
The sort of thing that couldn't happen now –
When Persia was the Empire of the Shah
And many were the furrows on his brow.
The peacock was the symbol of his throne
And many were its jewels and its eyes
And many were the prisons in the land
And many were torturers and spies.

From tyranny to tyranny to war
From dynasty to dynasty to hate
From villainy to villainy to death
From policy to policy to grave

The child grew up a clever sort of chap
And he became a mullah like his dad,
Spent many years in exile and disgrace
Because he told the world the Shah was bad.
'Believe in God', he said, 'believe in me.
Believe me when I tell you who I am.
Now chop the arm of wickedness away.
Believe in me. I am the great Imam.'

From heresy to heresy to fire
From clerisy to clerisy to fear
From litany to litany to sword
From fallacy to fallacy to wrong

And so the Shah was forced to flee abroad.
The Imam was the ruler in his place.
He started killing everyone he could
To make up for the years of his disgrace.
And when there were no enemies at home
He sent his men to Babylon to fight.
And when he'd lost an army in that way
He knew what God was telling him was right.

From poverty to poverty to wrath
From agony to agony to doubt
From malady to malady to shame
From misery to misery to fight

He sent the little children out to war.
They went out with his portrait in their hands.
The deserts and the marshes filled with blood.
The mothers heard the news in Isfahan.
Now Babylon is buried under dirt.
Persepolis is peeping through the sand.
The child who saw his father's killer killed
Has slaughtered half the children in the land.

From calumny
To felony
To mystery
To destiny
To tyranny
To dynasty
To villainy
To policy
To heresy
To clerisy
To litany
To fallacy
To poverty
To agony
To malady
To misery

The song is yours. Arrange it as you will.
Remember where each word fits in the line
And every permutation will be true
And every combination will be fine:

From policy to felony to fear
From litany to heresy to fire
From villainy to tyranny to war
From tyranny to dynasty to shame

From poverty to malady to grave
From malady to agony to spite
From agony to misery to hate
From misery to policy to fight!

JAMES FENTON

A political business

John Turner

R. P. T. DAVENPORT-HINES
Dudley-Docker: The life and times of a trade warrior
295pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.
0 521 26557 6

Dudley Docker, as his biographer observes, was the man who made the millions that Norah Docker lost. The dispersal of the Docker fortune in the 1950s, squandered by Sir Bernard and Lady Docker on yachts, drink and gold-plated Daimlers, was a public event; the making of it, no less spectacular in its way, was private, and the man who made it is unknown. The nervous, almost furtive figure who stares from the front cover might as well be Dr Bodkin Adams as a millionaire manufacturer. But, as this book convincingly shows, Dudley Docker is someone of whom every historian of Britain's twentieth-century decline ought to be aware.

Frank Dudley Docker was the fifth and youngest son of a moderately prosperous Birmingham solicitor. In 1881, at the age of nineteen, he opened a varnish business with his elder brother William. During the next twenty years his business interests in the Midlands ramified, and with his brother Ludford he made a local name as an accomplished county cricketer. The substantial expansion of his business brought him into contact with rolling-stock manufacturers, who were his principal customers, and in 1902 he brought off a remarkable merger between five local firms to create the Metropolitan Amalgamated Carriage and Wagon Company Ltd, later known as the Metropolitan Carriage, Wagon and Finance Company (MCWF), of which he became chairman. In 1906, while the strength of MCWF was growing fast, he also joined the board of Birmingham Small Arms, becoming deputy chairman in 1909 and arranging for that company to merge with Daimler in the same year. By 1914 he was a major figure in British heavy engineering, with rolling-stock, electrical and automobile interests. He had meanwhile occupied himself enthusiastically in Midlands politics as a Tariff Reformer and the founder of a "Business League" to act as a lobby group for the manufacturing interest. He also purchased the *Globe* in June 1914, thereby becoming the paymaster of one of the most consistently virulent of anti-Liberal national newspapers.

During the First World War Docker emerged as a leading figure, arguably the leading figure, among politically active businessmen. His companies were fully engaged in munitions production: MCWF was the main supplier of tanks to the British Army. Docker himself joined a number of official committees, but emerged from the war deeply disenchanted with the methods and results of state intervention in the economy. This was partly because the Ministry of Munitions, with good reason, had accused MCWF of profiteering. Anti-statism was the inspiration of Docker's political activities during the war. Using as a vehicle the British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers' Association, Docker helped to create in 1916 the Federation of British Industries, a club of large companies whose sole purpose was to influence governments. He also encouraged and financed a more shadowy body, the British Commonwealth Union, which ran business candidates in the 1918 election and later undertook "dirty tricks" activities against socialists and Asquithian Liberals. For a period Docker was an apostle of the "productioneer" doctrine, believing that the interests of business and the state were identical and could best be promoted by government support for big industrial trusts. R. P. T. Davenport-Hines calls this corporatism, even though it virtually excluded the participation of organized labour.

At the end of the war Docker's financial acumen was further demonstrated when he sold MCWF to Vickers Ltd for nearly £14 million. This was about £2.8 million more than the best estimate of what its assets were worth, and four times its current stock-market valuation. Docker himself became a director of Vickers and made a huge personal profit out of the sale, which was arranged with a number of Vickers directors who had been associated with him in the establishment of the FBI and BCU. The merger and the over-capitalization of MCWF brought the Vickers group to the brink of collapse in 1926. Docker, who had resigned from the board in protest at its lack of system in 1920, had the financial muscle to remain in a controlling position through nominee directors, and this position was not threatened by the Vickers reconstruction. He had in any case somewhat distanced himself from merely British business, and taken up foreign interests, particularly in the Belgian Société Financière de Transports et d'Entreprises Industrielles (Sofina), which built hydro-electric schemes and electrified railways all over the world. He was also deeply involved in the multi-national amalgamation of electrical engineering interests which became Associated Electrical Industries.

Between the wars Docker's manufacturing interests were complemented by his activities as a bank director. A pre-war critic of the City of London, he took up with enthusiasm the British Trade Corporation. This wartime creature was given a charter by Act of Parliament and told to help exporting industry as German and French industrial banks had done before the war. Many of its backers had been involved in some way in Docker's business or political schemes. After the war the government first undermined its commercial viability by encouraging it to lend to people like Denikin, then ignored it so that it withered. Docker left the board in some pique in 1920. His other important banking work was as a member of the Midland Bank's Birmingham Advisory Committee, which influenced the bank's industrial lending policy throughout the Midlands.

Davenport-Hines has written an unusual biography of this most unusual man. There are no private papers of any consequence, and Docker's inner mind must therefore be inferred from his business activities, themselves a matter of no little doubt. There is, consequently, little attempt to provide a chronological account of the life, and the author prefers to analyse his business activities company by company, and to treat his political activities separately. The business histories, in which Docker is often left far behind in the rush to explain what is going on, are extremely valuable in themselves. Discussions of Vickers and BSA are based on research for the author's unpublished PhD thesis and are to be welcomed for that alone; explorations of Sofina and AEI are based on wide-ranging new research in Foreign Office papers as well as the company archives of British participants.

On politics Davenport-Hines is a trifle less sure, but his insights are sound. His description of the hustling world of pre-war Birmingham Unionism is an invaluable corrective to the standard "high politics" accounts of the Tariff Reform movement. Docker's preoccupation was with government on sound "business lines". To this end he formed the Business League of Wednesbury, and to this end he directed the other more or less explicit business lobby groups to which he gave his name and his money between 1907 and 1922. Davenport-Hines exposes the naivety of Docker's political perception, and makes some cutting remarks about the competence and breadth of vision of the Edwardian manufacturer. Docker, he observes, "believed anyone who had made money had given ample proof of omniscience": but the book is full of evidence to the contrary. The rise and decline of the myth of the businessman's omniscience is an underpinning theme of the political chapters, though the author himself is perhaps naive to think that it is completely dead.

Great men, by definition, are not typical, and the lives of great businessmen should not perhaps be ridden too hard in attempting to explain Britain's industrial and economic decline. But Davenport-Hines, in his summing up, makes some suggestive points. Docker, he writes, "foresaw, but also exemplified, British decline. If increased production was a socially desirable goal for the country, many of his views were good prescriptions for that end, but some of his actions were not . . . . In business his talents lay in finance and dealing . . . . With the exception of rolling-stock in 1902, none of his great mergers were good for business or for the social and political economy of Britain." This excellent biography, the first book of a young scholar, should cause a lot of people to sit back and think.

Knowing but unknowable

William Mostyn-Owen

MERYLE SECREST
Kenneth Clark: A biography
310pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.95.
0 297 78398 X

After the enormous success of Kenneth Clark's television series *Civilization* in 1968, a great many journalists asked to interview him; among the Americans was Meryle Secrest. Impressed by her personality, Lord Clark encouraged her to write the life of his old mentor Bernard Berenson. The result, published in 1980 and dedicated to "K with love", does no credit to Clark's choice of author or to the author herself: liberally dosed with inaccuracies and innuendo, it would have made Berenson shudder. Yet, by 1978, the ageing Clark had agreed that Secrest should also write his own biography.

An attentive reading of the preface to *Kenneth Clark: A biography* suggests that unease about the Berenson life manifested itself in Clark's increasing curtailment of Secrest's access to personal documents and letters, and after his death in 1983 his archive was no longer available to her. It is difficult to accept at face value the author's statement that this was never intended to be an "authorized biography"; particularly when she goes on to say that Clark was "enthusiastic" about the project in spite of the fact that he had never given her written permission to quote directly from the letters, diaries and writings that she had been allowed to study.

Deprived of primary sources, Secrest nevertheless chose to plough on, re-working much of the material already used in Clark's autobiography and padding it out with an unwarranted amount of chit-chat about the flirtations and drinking habits of her subject and his first wife, Jane. (The distress that this must have caused members of his family can only have been increased by Secrest's use of an interview with Clark's daughter, who was unwise enough to assume that what she had to say would not be reproduced almost verbatim.)

Typical of Secrest's sensationalist approach is her account of Clark's acquisition for the National Gallery of seven panels representing scenes from the life of St Francis by the fifteenth-century Sienese painter Sassetta. It would have been far more interesting to discover more about Clark's administration of the Gallery, and if Secrest had consulted Ellis Waterhouse or Philip Pouncy, both of whom were Clark's colleagues, we might have learnt something of its internal politics. Unfortunately we are told little.

Secrest's artistic judgment is quixotic: the Tintoretto portrait in Clark's collection is variously described as "pretentious", "imposing" and "large": it is in fact a witty, half-length, life-size portrait of a noble youth who chose, in the manner of the times, to be painted in the guise of the young David. We are told that Leon Battista Alberti was "fabulously proficient . . . in physical exercises" and "skilled as a painter"; Piero della Francesca had been "neglected for centuries" – no mention of Roberto Longhi's monograph of 1927 – and there is a bizarre reference to Raphael's "Parnassus" which indicates a lack of familiarity with the Vatican museums.

Few people, if any, really knew Clark. Even his supposedly close friend Graham Sutherland told John Sparrow, "I do not really know K", and Henry Moore talked of Clark's "glass screen". Secrest shows us something of the hauteur of the young Clark couple at Oxford and something of a London society in which they were the leaders of what Berenson called "clank and flashion". But although her concluding pages look like a carefully prepared obituary Secrest adds little to Mary Berenson's description of Clark as "a queer mixture of arrogance and sensitive humility". The bibliography is inadequate and omits many of Clark's key publications.

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From a common spring

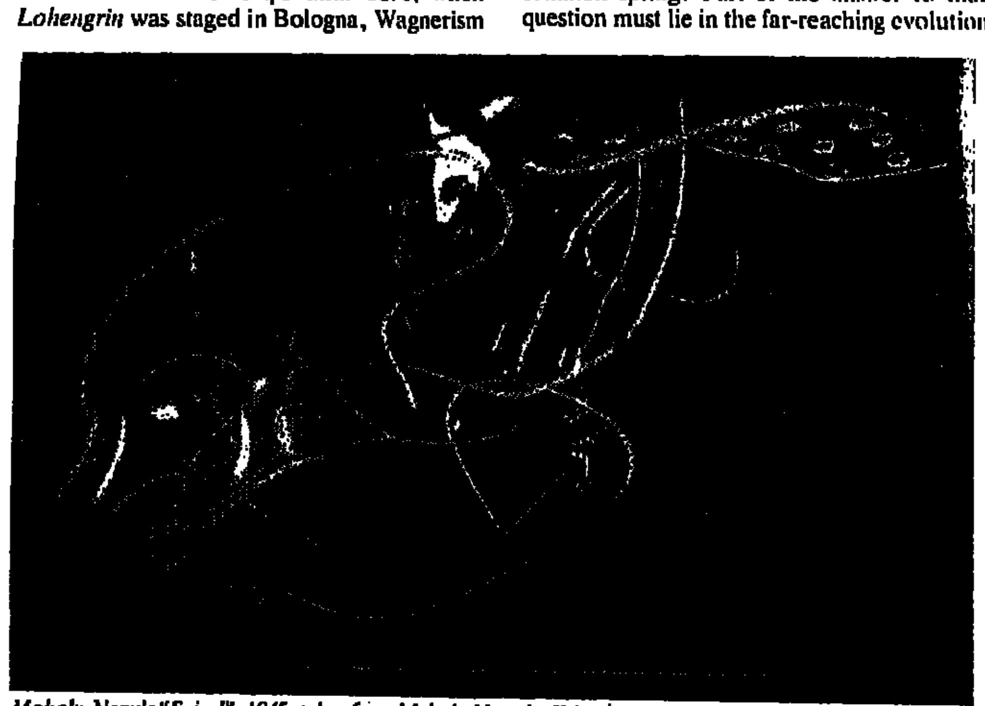
Peter Heyworth

DAVID. C. LARGE and WILLIAM WEBER (Editors)
Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics
361pp. Cornell University Press. $34.50 (paperback, $14.95).
0801492831

"No matter where one goes," complained Marx in 1876, the year in which the Bayreuth Festspielhaus opened its doors with the first complete staging of the *Ring*, "one is plagued by the question, 'What do you think of Richard Wagner?'" The plague spread like wildfire. Within a decade Wagnerism (not to be confused with Wagner's music) had permeated intellectual and avant-garde circles throughout western Europe, and the comparative lateness of its arrival in St Petersburg in the 1890s was marked by the exceptionally virulent form the infection took there. The range of those who succumbed is astonishing. It extends from Mallarmé to Shaw, from D'Annunzio to Meyerhold, from Diaghilev to Rutland Boughton, from Verlaine to Houston Stewart Chamberlain. The epidemic only burnt itself out in 1914 as German troops advanced across Europe, and even later than that in the Soviet Union, where Wagner's conception of the theatre was a potent influence on Lunacharsky, Lenin's first commissar of the arts.

In general terms there is no mystery about the influence that Wagner came to exercise, even (or especially) on artists who had little direct knowledge of his music. In 1849 he had sided with the Dresden revolutionaries against his employer, the King of Saxony, and after the failure of the revolt had been obliged to take refuge in Switzerland. He had thus established his progressive credentials. In Zürich he set about ordering his ideas on art and society; political regeneration would come about through the renewal of the theatre on what he chose to regard as a Hellenic model. That stance appealed to artists who were opposed to the *status quo* in culture as well as in politics. In addition, his music, even if unfamiliar, was unmistakably in the van of progress. Thus, long before the truly revolutionary implications of his as yet unperformed and even uncomposed music dramas had become apparent, Wagner was a name to be conjured with in avant-garde circles. When in 1860 Napoleon III charged the Opéra to stage *Tannhäuser* it was, as Gerard Turbow convincingly argues in his French chapter in *Wagnerism in European Culture and Politics*, in part an attempt to propitiate his adversaries on the Left.

Yet at that time Paris knew virtually nothing of Wagner's music at first hand. Turbow claims that between 1850, when there was an isolated performance of the overture to *Tannhäuser* and 1858 not a bar of his music seems to have been heard there. It was through his writings, and in particular through *Opera and Drama*, which was much discussed in the French press, that he became a controversial and familiar figure. The musicians did nothing to further his cause; on the contrary, it was subjected to sustained attack in the influential *Revue et gazette musicale* and elsewhere. His champions and disciples were writers and artists, who, one suspects, were enthralled by his rhetoric, rather as their counterparts today are drawn to Karlheinz Stockhausen for non-musical reasons (which is not, of course, to imply that there are not also excellent musical reasons for admiring him). It was much the same in Italy. Although not a single opera by Wagner was heard south of the Alps until 1871, when *Lohengrin* was staged in Bologna, Wagnerism



Moholy-Nagy's "Spiral", 1945, taken from Moholy-Nagy *by Krisztina Passuth (441pp. Thames and Hudson. £20. 0 500 54096 9).*

started to spread as early as the mid-1850s among young radicals such as Boito, later to be Verdi's librettist.

By the 1880s, when the full implications of the revolution that Wagner had brought about in the field of opera (if nowhere else) were apparent to all but the most entrenched conservatives, the virus had spread throughout most of Europe. Yet in each country it developed differing, even conflicting, symptoms. Whereas in France Wagnerism originated on the Left, in Italy it gravitated to the Right, a development that led finally to the proto-Fascist stance of D'Annunzio. Pious British Victorians were much preoccupied by the unrewarding task of reconciling Wagnerism and Christianity. Conversely, for Beardsley it seems to have opened a door to sensuous delights that could only be hinted at. Meanwhile, Shaw insisted that the *Ring* presented a symbolic picture of capitalism; Alberich's Nibelungen were the oppressed proletariat.

In France, where Wagnerism suffered a setback after the war of 1870, it re-emerged with redoubled vigour in the 1880s as a major influence on Symbolists, such as, notably, Mallarmé, and *l'art pour l'art* aesthetes, who were quite unconcerned with its political implications, whatever their hue. Most bizarre of all, however, was its development in Russia, where Wagnerism only reached its peak in the decade immediately before the outbreak of war in 1914. In a chapter full of fascinating and little-known detail, Bernice Rosenthal singles out three principal schools of thought – "aesthetic-cultural, mystical religious and revolutionary" – all of which drew on Wagner's ideas.

How was it possible for such wildly diverse *Weltanschauungen* to find nourishment in a common spring? Part of the answer to that question must lie in the far-reaching evolution that Wagner's thinking began to undergo after his first encounter with the writings of Schopenhauer in 1854. By this time he had settled with Cosima in Bayreuth; the "man of progress" had changed his colours. In this Wagner's political evolution mirrors with uncanny exactitude that of the German middle classes between 1848 and the establishment of the Second Reich in 1871; if they could not have liberalism, they were happy to settle for national unity. As David C. Large makes painfully clear, to an overwhelming extent the young disciples who gravitated to Bayreuth in Wagner's later years were stamped by the chauvinism, racialism and other *völkisch* prejudices that later made so crucial a contribution to the rise of Hitler. Winifred Wagner's early support of National Socialism was no more than a natural development of intellectual life at Wahnfried, the Wagner residence, before 1914.

Thus at a period when outside Germany Wagnerism had drawn into its orbit a bewildering variety of adventurous and creative spirits, at home it had shrunk into a mean and petty-minded cult. French intellectuals were contributors to *La Revue wagnérienne*, but one looks in vain for comparable names in the columns of the *Bayreuther Blätter*. Had he been invited to contribute (a highly unlikely eventuality), Thomas Mann would, even in his most nationalist phase during the First World War, have turned a cold shoulder on von Wolzogen's wretched publication. Not until the days of Wieland Wagner's New Bayreuth was the breach between reputable German intellectual life and the Festspielhaus finally bridged.

Yet, when due allowance has been made for the impact on his disciples of the far-reaching evolution that Wagner's thinking underwent, that alone can hardly account for the astonishing diversity of the causes that Wagnerism was used to bolster. While his main energies were consumed by creative tasks, he was all too apt to commit to paper ill-considered thoughts of the kind that more discreet characters confine to after-dinner conversation. His self-esteem was so huge that any fleeting fancy or prejudice seemed worthy of literary perpetuation. Thus, as Shaw observed, his writings resemble the Bible: a suitable quotation can be found to support almost any view, however preposterous. The allure of his character, the immensity of his achievements, the breadth of his interests and his huge prestige as an avant-garde figure who had set out to turn the world on its head and had in some degree succeeded were such that lesser men were drawn to his writings – and in them found whatever they wanted. Thus Wagner put his stamp on an entire period of intellectual life in Europe. Outside the field of music, where his influence was of course prodigious, it is questionable whether a single major work of art can be attributed to the amorphous influence of Wagnerism. Its influence remains pervasive rather than specific, no doubt one reason why the essays often take refuge in generalities when it comes to tracing the impact of one work on another.

As one wades through all the amorphous cross-currents that latched on to Wagnerism, respect grows for the achievement of Ernest Newman, who grew up at a period when the movement was at its zenith, and, in a manner prophetic of the hatchet that logical positivism in Vienna and Oxford laid to the roots of metaphysical speculation, bundled the whole of Wagnerism into an intellectual dustbin. No doubt he was over-drastic and his methods crude: complete understanding of Wagner's music dramas demands some knowledge of his writings. But Newman's healthy (and, it must be said, very English) scepticism today spares us much pernicious nonsense and the even more pernicious nonsense it gave rise to. These essays contain much fascinating information not readily available elsewhere. But the influence of Wagner's writings in isolation from the influence of his music can be of no more than marginal interest.

Songs without music

Stephen Lloyd

MICHAEL TREND
The Music Makers: Heirs and rebels of the English Musical Renaissance, Edward Elgar to Benjamin Britten
268pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £15.
0 297 78403 X

"Through and over the whole set another and larger theme 'goes', but is never played. . . . So the principal theme never appears, even as in some late dramas – eg Maeterlinck's 'L'Intruse'. . . – the chief character is never on the stage." With these words Elgar hinted at the "enigma" behind his set of orchestral variations which was to put England on the musical map and mark the real emergence of an English Musical Renaissance. One is tempted to make a similar observation of Michael Trend's *The Music Makers*, on account of the puzzling way in which the music seems discreetly to be kept in the wings and allowed only a minimal intrusion into the narrative.

Despite its subtitle, this is not a study of the English Musical Renaissance in the way that Frank Howes's comprehensive and penetrating 1966 survey was, or for that matter Peter Pirie's more recent and similarly titled book. Mr Trend's approach has been instead to offer a sequence of biographical outlines of thirty-five composers who were part of that renaissance, and to provide, as the author says, "a description of their lives and a character of their music". He has taken as his field composers born between Elgar (1857) and Britten (1913), though inevitably with some omissions, the most regrettable being Rawsthorne, Alwyn and Berkeley; it is a pity too that room was not found for even a mention of some minor but significant figures like George Dyson.

Trend has produced a very readable book, and in the fulfilment of the first of his declared aims has obviously read widely among the existing literature on British music to produce useful outlines of the lives of his chosen subjects. They are useful because instead of merely presenting conventional potted biographies, the author has attempted to project each composer's thoughts and attitudes against the musical background of the period, often with recourse to their own writing. In retrospect, however, an isolated contemporary quotation does not always contribute significantly to the overall picture and may even distort it. Few people nowadays would rank *The Apostles* above *Gerontius* and so agree with Jaeger in a letter to Elgar, quoted without qualification, that "*The Apostles* are certainly your maturest & greatest work" to date. And Bax's anecdote (which was anyway a second-hand report) of Delius's sole contribution to a Musical League meeting being a casual comment as to what food should be served ignores the fact that Delius was a prime mover behind the venture (launched incidentally in 1908, not 1909). What might be more to the point is why the League failed (and a disillusioned Delius lost interest), a reflection on the sorry state of British music politics at that time. Nevertheless for anyone wanting to investigate the principal personalities of the renaissance this book will prove a helpful guide.

Where it is much less helpful, and where these "portraits" in one respect ultimately fall short of their mark, is in their treatment of the music, seemingly from a distance and without any apparent familiarity with it. The author does not sufficiently identify the musical landmarks in each composer's career; there is no help here for any reader relatively new to the field. Vaughan Williams's middle trio of symphonies and Walton's shattering First do not even contribute a ripple of interest or comment to these pages, and virtually none of Delius's major compositions is named. The overall effect is thus to undervalue the composers' real achievements. One would also have liked to have seen due acknowledgement of John Ireland's considerable contribution in a field where few British composers have distinguished themselves – music for solo piano.

One can quibble with a number of smaller details. The film music for *The First of the Few* and a forgotten four-minute march for television hardly qualify as suitable examples of Walton's ceremonial music, and it is stretching a point to draw a parallel between Walton and Elgar because both "wrote for brass bands or occasional music for the stage", especially when Elgar's *Severn Suite* was not even orchestrated for brass by its composer.

Yet despite these reservations, to a half-century and more of British music Michael Trend's book makes a useful introduction, if more helpful in understanding the creative minds than in assessing their achievements.

Cloaked in knowledge

Marcia Pointon

KATHRYN CAVE (Editor)
The Diary of Joseph Farington
Volumes 13 and 14
1,000pp.
Volumes 15 and 16
648pp.
Yale University Press. £45 each pair.
0 300 03183 1 and 0 300 03270 6

On December 30, 1821, Joseph Farington attended evening service at Didsbury Church. It was his third visit to church that day. While descending the stairs from the gallery, burdened with hat, umbrella and prayer book and made clumsy by goloshes, he fell and tumbled to his death on the floor below. He had enjoyed his seventy-fifth birthday a few weeks earlier and had been spending the Christmas season with his brother's family near Manchester after travelling the 206 miles (from his London home) by coach in several stages. It seems appropriate that a man whose diaries chart day by day the minutiae of life as experienced by a professional but undistinguished artist should have ended his life not in the privacy of his bedroom but publically in church.

The publishing of *The Diary of Joseph Farington* that commenced under the editorship of Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre in 1978 has now been concluded under the editorship of Kathryn Cave. The index is eagerly awaited by those who began purchasing these volumes almost a decade ago. James Grieg's heavily selective volumes had given an idea of the riches of Farington's diary, all the more precious because of the sheer banality of his life and the unassertiveness of his character. But the most the serious scholar could hope for, before the appearance of this complete edition, was hours of struggle with Farington's handwriting on microfilm, courtesy of the Royal Library, Windsor. Now we have the diary in its entirety and Farington appears even more like a great sponge soaking up gossip and other people's affairs, eating dinners and charting the river of conversation that one can imagine flowing endlessly through London from his day on into our own.

The final two volumes, which cover the period January 1818 to December 1821, give us Farington slowing down; there are still the dinners (with their impressive sequences of courses printed out for our wonder and delectation and the diagrams of seating arrangements) but with increasing frequency we meet with entries which state curtly "my bodily state caused me to remain at home". Indeed for the social historian of medicine these last two volumes must be fertile hunting-ground, as Farington, always fascinated by his own and others' ailments, records treatment of one individual as ranging from the rubbing of mercury (into what?) (July 27, 1819) to incisions in the back on each side of the vertebrae "in which *many peas* were daily introduced when the wounds were dressed" (July 28, 1820). (Apparently the physician, Sir Anthony Carlisle, washed his hands of the case once the patient had accepted this particular course of treatment.)

Much of Farington's time is devoted to dealing with engravings for the publisher Cadell and in writing a memoir of Sir Joshua Reynolds which was finally published in September 1820. Constable continues to pay frequent visits and, we discover, forgets to put his name down as a competitor for Associate membership of the Royal Academy in 1818. His election, at last, in 1819 passes almost without comment and demonstrates yet again that Constable was virtually unknown to his contemporaries. There is discussion about whether Richard Payne Knight or Sir Walter Scott (Wilkie's choice) should be nominated for the Professorship of Ancient Literature at the Royal Academy. Combe's *Dr Syntax in Search of the Picturesque* is published and early in 1820, after a long illness, Sir Benjamin West, President of the Royal Academy, dies. Farington is deeply involved with arrangements for the funeral – West's Quaker origins give rise to questions about baptism and hence about the legitimacy of church burial; the funeral is followed by the sale of West's pictures. Jericault's [*sic*] "Raft of the Medusa", exhibited in London in July 1820, evokes merely the comment, "a fine performance which does honour to the French School", and Dr Thomas Monro adds to his collection (a formative influence in the English Landscape School) by purchasing from Farington drawings by Gainsborough and Canaletto.

In comparison with Volumes 13 and 14, which cover January 1814 to December 1817 and are full of news about the war with France, offering evidence of sympathy for Napoleon among some members of the English upper classes, the final two volumes are almost obsessively domestic. To be sure, responses to the trial of Queen Caroline in 1820 are documented and it is certainly interesting to learn of the mob rampaging the streets on June 8, 9 and 12, calling for householders to illuminate their windows in support of the Queen. "Were not the King so unpopular there wd. be no such upholding her", one of Farington's friends remarked. But the campaign to which, as E. P. Thompson has pointed out, Cobbett devoted his register week after week and which became a *cause célèbre* for *The Times*, takes a minor place in a narration whose landmarks are invitations to dine at Dulwich College and the unhandsome conduct of Holwell Carr in deprecating the "Hunting Picture" by Titian. The celebrated "Bacchus and Ariadne" by Titian had been purchased in Italy in 1806 by a British agent acting for William Buchanan, himself a dealer. It passed through the hands of several owners at increasing prices before being purchased by the National Gallery in 1826.

Farington pays scant attention to events of national importance. On account of this the diary is an extraordinary document: not only does it tell us about the manoeuvres of artists, engravers and teachers but it is also a narrative in which Knowledge is clearly constituted as a discrete category within the recording of everyday occurrences. If one wished to know how the Bathing Machine business was conducted at Hastings in 1818 one could turn to Farington's diary entry for October 17 of that year and find a concise account, including number of persons employed, payments, work practices, health risks for employees and conditions of work. In September 1820 Farington had access to first-hand knowledge of India through his acquaintance with Colonel Brown. Conversations with this gentleman led to what is probably the longest single entry in this volume. It comprises a factual essay upon the East India Company and its personnel, a view of India and its economy and customs and a glossary of names: "The *Mahrattas* are Hindoos – The food of the Hindoos is Rice. Native troops employed by the British Government includes both Mahommedans and Hindoos . . . . *Palanquins* are the only conveyances for travelling by land" and a vast amount more. One cannot help wondering why the seventy-four-year-old artist was concerned to record all this information.

Diaries are seldom private documents and Farington's is as self-conscious as any. His own religious devotions and his statements on his health provide for him a seeming bulwark against encroaching old age. His friends' opinions on crucial issues, such as how the war with France will end, surround him like a protective coating and preserve him from the need to commit himself to views of his own. But how things are done (governing India or running a bathing establishment on the South Coast) is Knowledge which can be grasped and made permanent within Farington's own narrative.

The Nineteenth Century, a copiously illustrated collection of essays edited by Asa Briggs on the theme of "The contradictions of Progress", and first published in 1970, has now been reissued (239pp. Thames and Hudson. £18. 0 500 04013 3).

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Carried up to heaven

Gordon Brotherston

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA
The War of the End of the World
Translated by Helen R. Lane
568pp. Faber. £9.95.
0571 13114 X

"The parched land shall become the sea and the sea the parched land; the desert shall be covered with grass and with flocks, under a single shepherd; then the apocalypse shall come at the century's turn, the Last Judgment and the world's end." Such were the visions of Antonio the Counsellor in Bahia, in north-eastern Brazil, towards the end of the last century. In retailing a dream of pastoral plenty he drew to him in thousands rebel peasants (*jagunços*) crippled by the drought of 1877, when not a single drop of rain fell on the *sertão* or backlands, as well as bandits (*cangaceiros*) who, no less hungry, preyed on everyone. And in execrating the Republic founded in Rio in 1889 as the Antichrist that would separate State from Church, the Counsellor aroused the sympathies of all classes and colours of men and women, notably the Cariry Indians who had struggled to defend their Bahia lands from the time of the first French and Portuguese invasions; and the blacks, emancipated under the Emperor in 1888, who now feared a new servitude. Antonio's charismatic teaching led to the founding of the "Temple" in the small *sertão* town of Canudos, to which the faithful came flocking. This quickly came to be seen as a threat to the security of the new Republic of Brazil, which proceeded to crush it, with wave after wave of military force, and succeeded in doing so, late in 1897, only after the most spectacular butchery.

At the time, the whole episode of Canudos and its spiritual leader was seen as a grim and unsettling monument standing on the very threshold of Brazil's nationhood. Today, it provides the substance of the novel, by Mario Vargas Llosa, now translated into English as *The War of the End of the World*, which is monumental too in its ambition and sheer size, and carries forward many of the techniques characteristic of his earlier novels: exposition on the grand scale of the nineteenth century (he has made explicit his debt to Balzac and Flaubert); the minute orchestration of a given historical moment or period; and the weaving together of distinct narrative threads and voices, a technique perfected in the even leng- their *Conversation in the Cathedral* (1969),

which is set in Odría's Peru.

As a story-teller Vargas Llosa has never before ventured beyond the boundaries of his native Peru. His newly forged Brazilian connection is significant in the context not just of his own novels but of the Latin American novel as a whole; for it highlights the tendency of the writers concerned to acknowledge each other's predicament and practice. In turning to Brazil, by far the largest Latin American state, yet often ignored by hispanophones, Vargas Llosa follows his compatriot José María Arguedas, who once thought to find in the *sertão* narratives of João Guimarães Rosa a glimpse of the hidden America, provincial, Indian and revolutionary, he cared for so passionately.

Setting off for Canudos in search of very different truths, Vargas Llosa takes as his guide and companion Euclides da Cunha, the Brazilian writer of the turn of the century to whom *The War of the End of the World* is dedicated, and who was eventually shot dead in Sao Paulo by an army officer. Having witnessed the final attack on Canudos, da Cunha described the whole campaign in what is generally acknowledged to be a foundation stone of Brazilian literature, *Os Sertões* (1902, superbly rendered into English by Samuel Putnam as *Rebellion in the Backlands*).

Da Cunha's work prefigures Vargas Llosa's in its grand conception and in its detail. The same range of human types, motives and perspectives is portrayed on both sides, those on the Counsellor's being meticulously detailed in race and racial mixture – *cafuso*, *mameluco*, *mulatto* – with the Indians as usual getting short shrift. (Da Cunha failed to show that the campaign against Canudos served above all as a prelude to the seizure of Indian lands, which continues still in Brazil.) There is too in da Cunha, as in Vargas Llosa, the same inexorable rhythm of the successive attacks on Canudos, each more powerful and better armed than the last, and a feeling of involvement in the Counsellor's guerrilla resistance. Da Cunha even offers character sketches of the "apostles" who surround the Counsellor and who play so large a role in Vargas Llosa's novel: Pajeu, Pedrão and Abbot João, the ex-*cangaceiros*; and the "Little Blessed One", Antonio.

Even when translating da Cunha this closely, however, Vargas Llosa has his own message to pass on, one that the sheer polyphony and invention of the novel make it hard to decode. As a writer he has always wanted to expose political corruption, to indict the system responsible, and even to avenge insults he feels he has suffered personally (1,000 copies of his first novel, *The Time of the Hero*, were burnt by the authorities at his old school in Lima, the Leoncio Prado military academy). In these terms, *The War of the End of the World* signals a move away from the cause of the oppressed, for, from the title page on, the story is touched with a certain irony, not to say sarcasm or false sentiment. Vargas Llosa is not telling us that the world *did* end at Canudos or that the Counsellor was anything other than a fanatic – this reading is amply confirmed by his recent *La historia de Mayta* (reviewed in the *TLS* on March 8 this year), which dismisses as futile an Indian uprising in 1950s Peru.

Vargas Llosa both celebrates and disowns Canudos as a parable for modern Latin America. He sets the episode in the larger context of Bahian separatism and foreign imperialism, of which Canudos could be construed as a mere side-issue. And he extends the cast of the Counsellor's followers to include types far more marginal than the *jacunços* and *cangaceiros*. Big João, the product of a slave-owner's genetic engineering, begins life as a psychopath; the saintly Maria Quadrado is a filicide; the Bearded Lady and a dwarf known as the Lion of Natuba come from a circus. For all the kindness they are shown and learn to show, these extras still look weird on the broader canvas; in fact they provide that carnival element which certain critics of the New Right have diagnosed as inevitable in the narratives of an "underveloped" Latin America. In the end, in the world of real politics, the destiny of these motley rebels is to get carried "up to heaven", to quote the closing words of the novel, or else to huddle helpless in a cave.

What these real politics amount to is well exemplified in the same closing sequence, where Colonel Macedo of the Bahia police defends his honour as a Brazilian and a loyal Republican. He does so against the insults of one of the military proper brought in from the south, whom he slaps down and pees on. It is true that the incident does not lack a certain camp humour; but the point about national loyalty sticks. The implications of the Canudos uprising are subsumed regardless in those of the new nation-state, in the spirit of the plea made by an erstwhile separatist: "Let us keep our Republic from turning into what so many Latin American republics have: a grotesque whirlwind Sabbath where all is chaos, military uprisings, demagogy."

This new realism of Vargas Llosa's is well exemplified in his treatment of the two characters in the novel who, because they are both writers and intellectuals, most resemble himself. The first is Galileo Gall, an itinerant Scots revolutionary, for whom Latin America comes as an illumination. He is permitted at first to expound his theories at length and, in commending Canudos to any whose convictions of the need for a major revolution are wavering, he actually anticipates the modifications made to Marx's urban bias by such future Latin American guerrillas as Che Guevara. By the end of Part Three, however, Gall has been so moved from the plot and from life, and exposed as foreign, excitable and somehow insensitive to the deepest needs of his would-be comrades, that in moral terms he is succeeded by an anonymous myopic journalist, who at least manages to make the Canudos woman Gall has left behind happy "for the first time". Yet he too folds up before the end and can no more focus on the consequences of Canudos than he could see to fighting there when his glasses fell off.

The War of the End of the World is an immense novel by any standards, touching resonantly on all the themes of current political debate in Latin America. For this reason it is good to find it so well carried over into English by Helen R. Lane. This excellent translation will make it harder to reduce Vargas Llosa's message to one of mere agreement with those North American or British politicians who seek to destroy massively popular, Christian and revolutionary governments in the American hemisphere which happen to displease them.

"A PERCEPTIVE, INCISIVE, SUBTLE PORTRAIT OF RUSSIA, ELEGANTLY WRITTEN BY A SUPERB JOURNALIST" *HEDRICK SMITH*

RUSSIA

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ÖDÖN VON HORVÁTH
The Age of the Fish
Translated by R. Wills Thomas
144pp. Penguin. £2.50.
0 14 005349 2

When this short novel first appeared in 1937, published in Amsterdam by Allert de Lange, it was immediately hailed by writers such as Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, Stefan Zweig and Franz Werfel as one of the most important novels to appear about the fascist state, and a chilling portrayal of those aspects of human nature which not only connive at, but actually encourage, the promotion of evil. The novel was translated into English, and eight other languages, within a year.

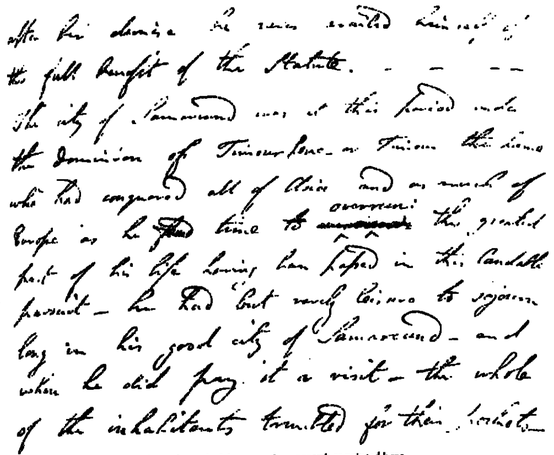
In an unnamed country, ruled by the Superplebeian (Horváth always referred to Hitler as "der Oberplebejer" in conversation, much as Brecht called him "der Anstreicher"), a teacher writes the account of his experiences. The boys he teaches are, almost without exception, willing vessels for the doctrines of racial hatred, political slogan-mongering and aggressive militarism. He himself is seen initially as a man of "liberal" views with an uneasy conscience: "Even if silence irks me – what good could one man do? He must keep his anger to himself." Against this background the teacher – neither he nor his pupils have names and there are no overt references to Germany – accompanies his class to their Easter camp. Here the story proper begins, with the theft of a camera. In an attempt to clear up this crime the teacher becomes increasingly involved in voyeuristic activity, which he justifies as seeking the truth. Gradually he becomes implicated in murder as well. The plot then follows several further twists before the true murderer is revealed, a sinister, cold and fishlike character who is fascinated by birth, copulation and death. As a Classics teacher who has lost his job – for having an affair with one of his girl pupils – comments: "Cold times are coming, my friend – this Age of the Fish . . . I'm only an amateur in astrology, but I know the earth's moving into the zone of the Fish. The souls of men, my friend, will become as rigid as the fins of a fish."

The novel is succinct, riveting and accurate. It works on many levels: as a detective story, internal monologue of self-discovery, portrayal of the liberal conscience in the fascist state; it also belongs with Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* and Musil's *Young Törless* as a perceptive analysis of school conflicts and adolescent sexuality. It is all the more pity therefore that R. Wills Thomas's 1938 translation should have been used. The language is dated, at times inaccurate, at times bowdlerizing. The taut, breathless German of the original is all too often emasculated. It is a sad example of the general inadequacy of this edition that Ödön von Horváth's name is spelt without umlauts or accent, both on the cover and in the prefatory note; the original publication date is given incorrectly (this was 1938 in England, not 1939); Horváth and H. H. Kirst would have been amused by the conflation of names that creates the absurdity of the Hans Heland Kleist prize being awarded to Horváth; nowhere is it mentioned that the original title was *Youth without God*, a faithful rendering of the German *Jugend ohne Gott*. Franz Werfel's excellent foreword to the 1938 edition would have helped to set the novel in context, but a more recent introduction might have been even more useful. Despite such criticisms Penguin are to be praised for bringing this work, by one of the major dramatists of pre-war Germany, to a wider public.

With a typical and endearing disregard for logic, the editorial to the one hundredth issue of *Ambit* appears in issue 101, published simultaneously. The latter is an index, while the former contains the familiar assortment of poems, stories and drawings. "The magazine started as it meant to go on", Martin Bax writes, and indeed the index reveals that several of the latest number's contributors have been there since the beginning. The editorial to this twenty-fifth birthday celebration ends on a dark note: just as *Ambit* 101 went to press, the Arts Council slashed its grant by 75 per cent.

The Tale of Calil, by Lord Byron

March 14th, 1816



Part of Byron's manuscript, from the end of the second paragraph as printed here.

Byron's unpublished prose satire

Leslie A. Marchand

In a journal notebook among the manuscript archives of John Murray's publishing house in London I discovered, while working on *Byron's Letters and Journals*, a strange composition in Byron's unmistakable handwriting. It is purportedly the story of a conflict between Tamerlane and his subjects in Samarkand, told with exaggeration and irony, and it amounts to a good-natured satire on the brutality of Tamerlane and a cynical appraisal of human nature in general.

The strangeness of the composition is compounded by the date, March 14, 1816, written clearly at the beginning. On that date Byron was in the midst of the most acrimonious unpleasantness of the separation proceedings with his wife and her relatives. He was torn between the desire for a reconciliation and the wish to escape from the whole business and go abroad. His books were seized for debt and were soon to be sold at auction. Malicious reports were circulating about him and his half-sister Mrs Leigh. Creditors were descending upon him from all sides, stimulated by the knowledge that he intended to leave the country. And yet he found time on that very day to send six orchestra seats for Drury Lane Theatre to Leigh Hunt.

On March 8 he had written a revealing letter to Thomas Moore in which he answered Moore's statement that his fault was in his "choice" of a wife by saying that there never was "a better, or even a brighter, a kinder, or more amiable and agreeable being than Lady B[yron]". But he added: "Her nearest relatives are a ***." Moore felt compelled to use asterisks when he published the letter, which has since disappeared.

Then he turned to matters other than his "private and pecuniary difficulties". He confessed: "I agree with you . . . that I have written too much. . . . I know not why I have dealt so much on the same scenes [his Oriental Tales] except that I find them fading, or *confusing* (if such a word may be) in my memory, in the midst of present turbulence and pressure, and I felt anxious to stamp before the die was worn out. . . . With these countries, and events connected with them, all my really poetical feelings begin and end. Were I to try, I could make nothing of any other subject, – and that I have apparently exhausted."

In that same letter he said something that may throw light on the mystery of the motive that prompted this curious composition at that particular time: "It is odd, but agitation of any kind gives a rebound to my spirits and sets me up for a time". Indeed it was the agitation of some emotional impasse that prompted almost all of Byron's early poems, as he often admitted. He had described poetry as "the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake", and he earlier wrote to Moore of the composition of "The Bride of Abydos": "All convulsions end with me in rhyme; and to solace my midnights, I have scribbled another Turkish story."

And later, when he had turned to satire in the rollicking stanzas of *Beppo* or *Don Juan* or *The Vision of Judgment*, his friends had difficulty in believing that they were sometimes written, not in agitation or exaltation, but in moods of the deepest melancholy or depression. Writing to Scrope Davies from Venice in 1817, he confessed to being in very low spirits, "which you would not suspect from this buffooning perhaps – if you did not know human nature enough to be aware that when people are most melancholy they are often most addicted to buffooning". And to Moore he wrote from Pisa, "You seem to think that I could not have written the 'Vision', &c., under the influence of low spirits; but I think you err."

But now the agitation and the "low spirits" prompted him to find release in prose. He felt that he had come to a dead end in the poetry of the East and yet the subject still fascinated him. What prompted the particular form of the story is difficult to conjecture. His books were gone, but he had read enough of Eastern history to have in his memory a sufficient supply of details of the setting and the characters to fill his need. We may wonder whether he started the tale with the idea of making something of the conflict of Calil and his wife over his son's name, and then left that (never to return) to pursue the larger subject of Tamerlane and the people of Samarkand.

The cynically detached and almost humorous account of barbarity and cruelty in Tamerlane's world is much in the vein of Swift. It can be taken as a satire on the inane savagery of war as pictured in the description of the battle of Ismael in the seventh and eighth cantos of *Don Juan*. And this brings us to the realization that the significance and the interest of the tale must be in its foreshadowing the moods and manner of Byron's later satires in the ottava rima, a verse form which he had not yet discovered and which exactly fitted that style and served him so well in his Italian years. That light and amiable cynical tone was common enough in his letters from his earliest years, but he had not ventured it in verse, being constrained before he went to Italy by his reputation as the melancholy Childe Harold. In a sense this tale could be considered a trial run in prose of the style and tone of *Don Juan*.

Punctuation, and the use of capital letters – though not Byron's spelling – have been standardized in accordance with modern usage in the text printed here, for ease of reading.

Demir Bash was born in the city of Samarcand in the 800th year of the Hegira. His father and mother quarrelled before his birth and never agreed after it; the cause of difference was whether their son (the stars had foretold it would be a son) should be called Demir *Bash* or Demir *Tash*. The father somehow carried this point and it was the only domestic one he ever did carry; and the boy was called Demir Bash by all the citizens of Samarcand and by his father ever after, though Sudabah, his mother, and her particular friends could never be brought to denominate him otherwise than Demir Tash.

Upon her deathbed, many years afterwards, she sent for their only son, on whom she doated with the fondest affection. Her afflicted husband, Calil, stood with a mute and overwhelming air of sorrow at her left hand, her son in tears upon her right. There was a sick nurse in the chamber in the act of shaking a mixture furnished by one of the two physicians, who were discussing in an anteroom whether the disease sprang from a redundance of bile – or total want of it. The only point on which they coincided was that the patient was in no danger. Sudabah, however, could but just articulate: she beckoned with a faint smile to her son to approach. "Farewell", said she, "I am going to heaven, my dear Demir Tash". The last word, of these her last words, she uttered with as much emphasis as her strength permitted, and turning to her husband with a look of triumph and pious resignation she repeated the word "Tash" and quietly expired. She was deeply lamented and had an expensive funeral, with a pretty monument which was kept in good repair till Calil married again, which he did at last – though inconsolable for many weeks. This might seem a work of supererogation, as the law allows to every true Mussulman *four* wives; but during the lifetime of Sudabah Calil had found it as well to dispense with the other three, and even after her demise he never availed himself of the full benefit of the statute.

The city of Samarcand was at this period under the dominion of Timourlane – or Timour the Lame – who had conquered all of Asia, and as much of Europe as he found time to overrun: the greatest part of his life having been passed in this laudable pursuit, he had but rarely leisure to sojourn long in his good city of Samarcand, and when he did pay it a visit, the whole of the inhabitants trembled for their pockets, which he and his ministers had contracted a habit of emptying. He also cut off heads, but with this practice his subjects found little or no fault, provided that decapitation and confiscation did not go together. If the Sultan decollated the father of a family, His Majesty was responsible to Mahomet for the sin, and the son might find another, or at least a father-in-law (or four as allowed by the law); but it was extremely difficult to acquire another estate when the first had been confiscated.

For these reasons those who had lost relatives and properties were greatly disaffected; those who were deprived of their relatives only, resigned and loyal; but the most outrageous and treasonable of subjects were such persons as had been permitted to retain and maintain large families, but had been stripped of patrimonies by repeated exactions. However, the whole people exclaimed – when Timour was too far off to hear them – against the payment of money, and perpetually swore that they had no more money to pay. They inveighed against war. They dispatched deputies to Timour, who had just taken Delhi, to congratulate him on his victories and implore a release from certain imposts, the collection of which they averred to be impossible. Timour accepted their compliments with an admirable grace; his reply was most gracious: he said that his greatest glory – except the especial protection of Mahomet – was the approbation of the citizens of Samarcand, that his sole object in fighting was to conquer for them, that the legion raised by that faithful metropolis had covered itself and the field of battle with immortal honour, more particularly the eleven thousand who had fallen in the arms of Victory – which were capacious enough to receive them all; that their names would be everlasting, and the Gazette of that day got by heart by all posterity; that he only required a few thousand recruits and five hundred thousand tomans of gold to finish the contest – which he trusted would be forthwith furnished; that in the meantime half the number of the deputies should remain in pledge, and the remainder return to Samarcand with three hundred standards and a heron's tail taken from the head of the dead Mogul general, to be placed in the mosque of Samarcand between the bridle of Balaam's ass and the sacred curtains brought from the shrine of Mecca.

Such were the politics of Samarcand at the birth of Demir Bash. The whole city went out to meet the standards; all the citizens were delighted with the heron's tail. To be sure, the account of killed had put some three-and-thirty thousand persons into mourning, but all agreed that glory was – glory (especially the taylors). A day of festival was appointed and kept; public thanksgivings were thanked; songs were sung; wine (for they were not rigid Mahometans) was drunk; and the mosques were illuminated with [circles?] of lamps as during the Bairam. The women danced and talked without ceasing. The men stalked about in their holiday garments. The whole city rang with mirth and music to the suburbs. The rich made feasts for their equals, and plentiful tables (for that day only) were furnished for the poor. All was unvaried festivity, the day was delightful, the night was sublime and the next morning all Samarcand awoke with the headache.

The next day at six by the Mahometan reckoning – but twelve by all Christian clocks (for they differ as much in their mode of apportioning time as eternity) – the next day at noon, as Calil, looking like saffron from the excess of yesterday, walked forth to the Bazar, where he met many of his acquaintance in a like condition, he heard the voice of the crier from the minaret; but the state of his stomach not permitting him to perform the requisite prostrations of a devout Mussulman, he determined to postpone his prayers till the evening.

But he soon found that the words of the crier regarded temporal concerns only, and joining the crowd which accumulated in the open space around the mosque his ears were regaled with the following proposition: "In the name of Timour the Lame – whose form is perfection, whose word is wisdom, whose deeds are [mercy?], the brother of the sun and moon, cousin to the planets and a distant connection of the remotest stars, the king of the world to whom nothing can be refused (and if it is refused is taken nevertheless) – you, his faithful subjects and honoured citizens of Samarcand, are hereby summoned to decide by lot to the amount of eleven thousand volunteers for the invincible army of the most indulgent of sovereigns, and to provide further with all speed the sum of five hundred thousand tomans for his royal accommodation, in such equitable divisions of payment as may become the first of cities to the most generous of monarchs; and in virtue of this being done all further imposts, taxes, duties, customs, &c, &c, shall be remitted – saving only one small and optional tax, which none need pay who prefer dispensing with the article on which it is laid, viz, a tax on respiration; and those who do not choose to respire – shall be exempt from all demands. [*]

It would be difficult to describe the emotions of the hearers of this brilliant harangue – to which the peroration and promised remissions by no means reconciled anybody. They first stared, then looked on the ground, then whispered, then murmured. The poor would not serve, but everyone suggested the expediency of serving to his next neighbour, the rich complimented each other with the precedence in furnishing the contribution, and no one seemed disposed to be magnificent, or warlike. At length the murmurs became like the rushing of waters, and at [*sic*] louder and louder, till a furious tumult ensued; blows were struck, stones were thrown, guards were called for, the men ran home for their sabres, the women screamed and the children roared; all the streets were in an uproar. The fact was, that the city of Samarcand was not yet sober.

A party of the younger inhabitants of the Bazar, headed by an Armenian breeches-maker who had become bankrupt by furnishing Tamerlane's bodyguard with trousers upon credit, broke open the door of the minaret and, ascending to the gallery at the summit, threw down the crier, who cried out more lustily than ever – but was less listened to; he fell amongst a party of Parthian Guards just arrived to disperse the mob, dismounting the officer who led them and breaking two ribs and the small bone of his right ancle in the concussion, besides receiving several contusions

which the surgeon said required many embrocations and long attendance. Everybody was by this time too fully employed to mind him, and his was not the only surgical case already fit for investigation.

The Parthians flew upon the crowd, and the citizens belaboured the Parthians, a great many turbans and some heads amongst them flew about, the clamour and the riot increased every moment and, as all the citizens were armed, the disturbance might have been very fatal had they divided into equal parties. But their whole fury was [bent?] against the unlucky soldiery, who were only doing their duty and after a severe conflict were obliged to withdraw, which they did at full speed, leaving the market-place to the victors, with all the wounded, dead, dismounted and missing, as trophies; and then the conquerors began to ask why they had been fighting.

This was a question which nobody seemed at leisure to answer, but all agreed that as they had begun, it was as well to go on; and so, on this principle, before sunset all Samarcand was in open rebellion. Calil in the beginning of the fray had been contented to remain a spectator. But example being very contagious, the fumes of yesterday's festival being also condensed into that kind of headache which renders a man of spirit rather fractious, more particularly when the peccant part is admonished by the flat side of a sabre, which a Parthian thought proper to apply by way of a plaister to Calil's skull as he stood gazing at the cómmencement of the riot – all these reasons induced Calil, without reasoning at all, to betake himself to what he afterwards called self-defence. That was to lay about him and everyone within reach of his weapons in the most offensive manner, so that, before the victory was decided, he had done enough to forfeit fifty heads and twice as many estates if Tamerlane's government should ever govern again.

All the citizens were of the same opinion: they therefore shut the gates, examined their fortifications, chose a council, elected the Armenian breeches-maker (whose name was Dumouss) general in chief and began to look about for an army.

This was not the easiest thing in the world to find; at least an army to oppose Tamerlane's. For the brilliant youth of the city had been drafted off to those cursed campaigns, which at last seemed likely to end at home, and those that remained, though sufficiently numerous to beat the guards in garrison (who were few, as Samarcand had been esteemed the most loyal of all possible cities) and cut a respectable figure in a popular tumult, yet they had neither inclination nor ability to muster force for the open field, and still less to stand a regular siege.

They therefore determined to throw themselves on the protection of the Sophi of Persia, and selected Calil as their ambassador.

Calil, who had not yet recovered from his headache, which had been considerably increased by the application before mentioned and several additional bumps in the course of the conflict, was at home rubbing his sinciput with a balsam (and [podeldor?] had not yet been compounded and exported) and cursing his stars, together with all tax-gatherers, potentates, guards, sabres and venders of wine whatsoever, while Subadah [*sic*], his wife, stood by him asking questions, when he received his credentials.

He took them without much parley, peeped at Demir-Bash, who was sprawling on a sopha, and patted his cheek, gave Subadah [*sic*] a short domestic charge and, calling for his slaves, mounted a dromedary, which set off carrying him and the fate of Samarcand in a letter to the Sophi, written in very good Arabic by the clerk of the Cauzee (or Cadi as it is metamorphosed in European orthography) and looked upon as an exquisite specimen of diplomatic supplication. Before Calil had got an hour's ride from the city gate he began to commune with himself on the nature of his charge, and its possible consequences: he could calculate with no great probability on the Sophi's succour, or its efficacy if granted. He knew that Tamerlane neither wanted the power nor the will on the smallest pretext to make a mummy of the Sophi, and a pyramid of the numskulls of Samarcand, with his own in particular as a pinnacle to the edifice. He considered all this with the deepest attention for three minutes, and in the end, like a true patriot, changed his politics and his road at the same moment; and instead of the way to Isfahan pursued the route to Delhi.

His retinue seemed a little surprized; but the affair was his, not theirs, and it became them to follow the ambassador's dromedary. The ambassador's dromedary, having travelled that road before, appeared to give it the preference; and this was an additional inducement to Calil, who thought that Mahomet had inspired the animal with this predilection in favourable coincidence with his own. It never occurred to him that a dromedary could have any notions of his own, or that Mahomet had other things to think of than the politics of Samarcand.

In a reasonable number of weeks they reached Tamerlane's encampment round the city of Delhi and were luckily the first bearers of the intelligence of the revolt, for nobody had heard anything of the fugitive remains of the Parthian garrison. Tamerlane was at this time solacing himself in his harem: he had the legal number of wives, and was an attentive husband, but on his expeditions these were left at home, and the Tartar sovereign was permitted the indulgencies of chaste concubinage during the warlike season of the year.

But on the day after Calil's arrival and before the ambassador could be presented, His Majesty was seized with a fit of the gout, which enflamed his toes and his temper to that degree that Calil began to wish that he had pursued the route prescribed by his instructions – a consideration which came a little of the latest. But there was no avoiding the audience, for Timour was a man of business and, though indisposed, would postpone nothing; so between two long double rows of white and black eunuchs, ranged like the pieces of a game at drafts, clothed in a long caftan of state and led through avenues of the royal pavilion, Calil with many palpitations made his obeisance in the sublime presence. When Tamerlane, instead of the expected men and money, heard nothing but rebellion of subjects and expulsion of troops, he became furious and swore by the pigeon that picked the pease from the ear of Mahomet, and by the hump of the holy camel, that he would sow with salt the ground where Samarcand stood and make a supper for the crows of all the inhabitants.

This was his first ebullition, but by and bye he thought of contenting himself by what he called decimating the citizens: that was, according to the royal mode of calculation, punishing nine out of ten with corporal infliction and the tenth man by mulct. From this he made, however, an amnesty in favour of Calil (who had made ashes of his Arabic credentials to the Sophy), whom he firmly believed to be the most loyal and only faithful subject of his native city.

Tamerlane was not a man of many words. Before Samarcand had a notion of Calil's having had a reply from the Sophi, the inhabitants, awaking one morning, found that the town had become the headquarters of Timour and that his army had the honour of forming a guard for their immaculate ambassador, the faithful Calil.

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Supporting the romance

William St Clair

PETER W. GRAHAM (Editor)
Byron's Bulldog: The letters of John Cam Hobhouse
364pp. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. $25.
0 814203671

John Cam Hobhouse was Byron's dearest and staunchest friend. After Cambridge he accompanied him on the decisive journey to Greece and Turkey which resulted in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. He stood best man at the wedding. He visited him in exile in Italy and was preparing to join the expedition in Greece when news arrived of the poet's death. Thereafter Hobhouse was to devote considerable effort to trying to shape his friend's posthumous reputation both as a man and as a writer.

Despite overwhelming evidence that Byron fully returned his love and respect, it has been the custom to regard Hobhouse as unworthy of the central position in the Byron romance which he necessarily occupies. He is usually cast as a plodder, or a buffoon, the straight guy whose role is to set off the brilliance of his clever companion. Biographers, in imitation of Byron's unattractive habit of making fools of his friends behind their backs, have been happy to join in the disloyal sneering and jeering.

In *Byron's Bulldog*, Peter W. Graham prints all the surviving letters from Hobhouse to Byron which he has been able to discover. There are 109 in all, ranging from 1808 until a month before Byron's death in 1824, and the editor estimates that they represent as much as 80 per cent of the letters actually sent. All are transcribed from the originals in the possession of John Murray. Taken with Byron's own letters to Hobhouse – which are among the best in the English language – we now have the materials to trace the development of their relationship. Hobhouse writes well, and if he is sometimes in awe of his world-famous friend in the earlier years, by the time Byron retires to Italy he is quite capable of giving as good as he gets. His letters, like Byron's, are sharp, racy, full of gossip and occasionally coarse. They are interesting not only in themselves, but because they contain a good deal of information about Byron's life which is not available elsewhere. We learn, for example, that this first visit to Greece and Turkey cost over £1,600 – no wonder English travellers were all milords – and when Byron adds to a list of supplies which he wants brought from England "and I forget the other things", we now know that he meant "condums". Among the best are the scolding letters protesting at Byron's plans for *Don Juan* but loyally agreeing to arrange the publication nevertheless.

The title of the book is unfortunate. Hobhouse and the radical Whigs hated the bulldog image – pugnacious, fat, ugly and not too bright – by which his more stolid countrymen sought to celebrate the national characteristics that had defeated the sleek and clever French. Hobhouse was no unthinking or xenophobic John Bull. Although he lost a brother at Quatre Bras, he was one of the few to oppose the war which the allies instigated in 1814 in order to depose Napoleon in favour of the Bourbons. Later he spent a long life in politics – not without some success – in attempting to moderate the brutalities, such as flogging in the armed services, which caricatures such as the bulldog helped to sustain and prolong.

The letters which Hobhouse wrote from Belgium and Paris during the Hundred Days were later worked up and hugely expanded into two volumes for publication in the anonymous *Substance of Some Letters written by an Englishman . . . during the Last Reign of the Emperor Napoleon*, a book which caused quite a stir in the years after Waterloo. We now have the originals from which it was compiled. The editor does not mention (and may not have known) that, in the second and third editions, Hobhouse acknowledged his authorship on the title-page and added a long open introductory letter to Lord Byron. Hobhouse implies strongly that the published versions had actually been written and sent to Lord Byron at the times at which they are dated and that they represent genuine on-the-spot impressions unaffected by hindsight. There are several questions raised by this claim which a scholarly edition ought to have tackled.

Although the notes are generally full and helpful, the editor sometimes ducks his duty. Modern readers need to be reminded that "argal" is slang for ergo – from *Hamlet* – and "gokes" for gods. I feel too that Graham is not always fully in tune with the ironic, allusive style that marks both sides of the correspondence. For example, when Hobhouse called Dover a dirty "*pot de mer*", he did not necessarily intend to write *port* and I expect "refer" was Cambridge slang for dinner. The references to Poesbie and other misspelt words with long vowels are jokes at the expense of John Murray's Scottish accent, and there are probably other shared innuendoes of this kind if we could recognize them. It is worrying therefore that we cannot rely on the accuracy of the transcriptions. Did Hobhouse really invariably write words like "favor" and "honorable" in the modern American style? The editor has altered, without comment, the spelling of his *Defence of the People* to *Defense*, which suggests that he has misread or silently altered the reading of the manuscript. Indeed he admits in the introduction that there are silent alterations. Some of the Latin and most of the Greek quotations are garbled. So are some of the Greek place-names. Hobhouse, who was intensely proud of his classical scholarship and who tirelessly peppered his writings with tags, would have been deeply distressed.

Despite these flaws, the book is one which nobody interested in Byron can afford to miss. It is one of the few original sources for his life which have not hitherto been available in print.

Harriers

[Bellicose *H. Sap.*] Skull-cleaving Harriers,
distant a field before their ventriloquous
stridencies strip dense gold male flowers,
hedge-hop me pruning the *Quercus ilex*.

Valorous, some of them, homicides all by grey acquiescence.
Holm sap is smeared and it smells bitterly on the poised blade.

PETER READING

LITERATURE AND WAR – A SYMPOSIUM

The Soviet Union

Joseph Brodsky

As if to foreshadow the concept of the anti-hero, the Second World War, for all its epic scale, proved to be not so much the archetypal confrontation between good and evil as the battle of two demons. On a closer look, one of hindsight's true benefits, it appears to be a family feud, for we should not forget that Nazism was the acronym of National Socialism. Politically, economically and structurally, Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia had more in common than otherwise. This kinship between two tyrannies went far beyond the stated and secret paragraphs of the Nazi–Soviet Pact of 1939 and is best reflected in the fate of the property contested in the feud: now all of it belongs to the winner. Forty years and thousands of warheads later, an aloof historian recalling for instance the actual *casus belli* – the British guarantees of Polish independence – may even conclude that, legally speaking, the Second World War was in vain.

This conclusion will not be entirely correct, of course. For apart from those who actually survived the greatest episode of carnage in human history, the real winner happened to be the idea of the Socialist *Polizeistaat*, legalized as it were by this war's outcome. The losers were roughly 60 million dead (counting all the war theatres) and the idea of democracy. It was the latter that gave the battle of the two demons its epic semblance, by playing the single angelic role in this conflict – that is, by siding with what was perceived at the time as a lesser evil. By attacking both the fellow-demon and seraphs, Herr Hitler made them close ranks in such unprecedented fashion that a thought about diabolical conspiracy is not easily dismissed. The levelling effect on Christian ethics that the Second World War produced seems to be in direct proportion to that war's fatalities; but then how else can you do away with a system of ethics if not by getting rid of its carriers?

Russian losses in the Second World War were 20 million lives. It is surely less than the number of lives claimed by Collectivization and Stalin's Great Terror, but it is more than, let's say, the number of Jews who perished in the German ovens. Yet this figure, first made known in the West by the Soviet General Staff's Colonel Kalinov, who defected in 1946, was never publicized in the Soviet Union, so that while nearly every Russian family sustained a loss, the magnitude of the catastrophe never became known to the nation. The Second World War exists in the national conscience on the level of personal tragedies, never adding up to any cumulative notion or concept such as "holocaust" or armageddon. The main credit for this, of course, goes to the state propaganda; some of it, however, can be attributed to post-war literature.

Both the principle of causality and national statistics in the Soviet Union are monopolized by the state. So is literature, which is regarded as yet another outlet for state propaganda. Hence the interpretation of the origins and the human consequences of the Second World War is for literature, by and large, a matter of embellishing the state-sponsored version. No work of post-war Soviet fiction addresses even obliquely the Nazi–Soviet pact of 1939, the partition of Poland, the annexation of the Baltic states, incursion in Bessarabia or any such trifles. Similarly, events such as the destruction of whole army groups, surrender of military units larger than a platoon and the fate of Soviet POWs were, until quite recently, taboo subjects even for the top brass's memoirs.

For Russian readers, the Second World War starts on June 22, 1941, with the treacherous "faith-breaking" (in Russian *veroplomnoe* – a very telling epithet considering the intimate closeness of Soviet–German relations at the time) attack by Germany on the Soviet Union. That the war had already been in full swing in the West for nearly two years has not been public knowledge in the Soviet Union, especially during the last two decades. The only mention the Allies are normally accorded has to do with their reluctance to open the Second Front – implying some sort of complicity with the Nazis, or a malicious desire to see Russia bleed to death. Lend-lease, the PQs carrying to the Soviet Union the military hardware and food supplies which helped it to survive its first two years of war, hardly ever see the dark of cyrillic print. Perhaps rightly so if only because Allied losses do not compare with those sustained by the Soviet Union.

Still, it was, to no small degree, thanks to US canned meat in their rations that practically every author of war narratives found himself able to tell his story. Yet man, and especially a Soviet man of letters, is neither what he eats nor what's eating him. A Soviet writer, through conviction or coercion, is what he is being fed by the State. The State's line on the Second World War is that it was a period of extraordinary heroism and self-sacrifice by Russian people defending their Motherland against the hordes of foreign aggressors. Like photographs, or remarks that grass is green this assessment is absolutely true.

The trouble with this line, though, is not only that it relieves the State from the responsibility for getting the nation into the war, or for the losses the nation suffered through the State's own criminal negligence. It also presents the fight for lives and homeland as a defence of the Socialist state and its interests. But even the battle-cry of Russian soldiers during the Second World War – For Motherland, For Stalin! – shows their sense of priorities. It is both unpalatable and wrong to think that 20 million laid down their lives for Stalin or for the system he stood for. The grass over their graves is green indeed. But while "the land belongs to the people", the people, including the dead, belong to the State.

The awful truth is that the Second World War turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the Soviet State. It proved the viability of the totalitarian system and supplied it, in its own eyes, with a linear logic. Hardly anything functions with a greater coherence in time of war than a tyranny, and hardly anything justifies a tyranny's existence better than a military victory. Arriving on the coat-tails of the Great Terror, the war had obliterated whatever discontent there was remaining in the country and made the nation identify with the system far more closely than any of its repressive policies could have done. Even the population of its numerous concentration camps, gripped by the universal fit of patriotism, volunteered for fighting.

By the same token, war proved to be a blessing in disguise for Russian prose and poetry. For the first time in three decades they were allowed to address tragic subjects and deal with them in considerable depth. Monstrous as this may sound, the war as a theme offered Russian literature a welcome break from the one-dimensional glorification of building socialism or, for that matter, from mythologizing the events of the 1917 Revolution and subsequent Civil War. The point is that for about thirty years, as the country bled its way through great social changes, literature had to lie, or keep its mouth shut, about all those things: revolution, civil war, great hunger, collectivization, great terror. Now the war produced the ultimate in bloodshed, yet this time it wasn't an inside job. So everything that had amassed in writers' psyches about human suffering, torment, heroism, stoicism, self-sacrifice, about death and betrayal, gushed on to the pages of post-war novels and poems.

The literature about war during the last four decades could be roughly divided into two categories: pre and post 1960s. The first, with few exceptions, is the product of writers who established themselves prior to the war as masters of socialist realism and who, during the war, served as staff writers or reporters on the various government and army dailies. Their treatment of the matter is by and large highly didactic and emblematic, in the best traditions of socialist realism. After reading any of these books one may conclude that the war was won not so much by soldiers as by their wise political commissars, lean, unswerving marshals of the General Staff, and personally by Comrade Stalin himself, whose military genius awes and dumbfounds witless adepts of Moltke and Clausewitz. These volumes flattered the general public with the assurance of profound wisdom and resolve (as well as endearing glimpses into the personal humanity) of its otherwise inscrutable leaders. They enhanced the mystique of the Party's top echelon and, with the benefit of hindsight, predicted an inevitable victory which, in terms of composition, provided them with an equivalent of a happy ending in the form of VE Day and fireworks in Red Square.

Those books were short-lived, yet the state kept re-issuing them year after year as though unwilling to part with these examples of its own scrupulously crafted demagoguery. For want of anything better they would be read, of course, by the masses. Yet bad as they were, it must be noted that they played their therapeutic role in the life of society by dulling the senses and thus ushering in the process of oblivion. Of similar consequence were numerous hagiographies of fallen heroes whose desperate suicidal exploits were indeed frequently of mythological proportions. As such, these books would be made part of every high school syllabus, aiming to make youths who survived emulate, should the need come, the deceased.

The only exception to this pulp was Victor Nekrasov's *In the Trenches of Stalingrad*, where people talked, fought, feared, boozed and died as close to the real as the stylistic idiom of the time could allow. The author, an architect by education, was himself an infantry captain, and a combination of talent and first-hand experience of combat yielded a book that even in those dark times won him the highest literary award, the Stalin prize. A quarter of a century later, Nekrasov finds himself on the shores of the river Seine, as an émigré, admiring façades that have never been shattered by German shells, or perusing the works of the authors who ended the war as lieutenants.

Small wonder, since the latter, the writers of the post-1960s, who constitute what is frequently called "the literature of lieutenants", are in many ways Nekrasov's spiritual offspring. To say the least, *In the Trenches of Stalingrad* paved the narrative road for all of them: Vasil' Bykov, Yury Bondarev, Georgy Baklanov, Vyacheslav Kondratiev. Different as they are, these authors display a common openness to individual suffering, to the non-heroic, often shabby circumstances of fighting and dying. Their characters make or do not make their way through the swamps of war, driven not so much by ideological conviction as by pure instinct for survival, by very often meaningless commands, by fear, by a sense of duty and a compassion for one another. This is a realism without an epithet, bordering frequently on naturalism. If these authors don't aspire to assess the war in its entirety, it is not only because they are fully aware that if they did their work would not see the light of day, but also because of their intention to tell the story "the way it was".

In other words, they limit their scope

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deliberately. With the exception of Vassily Grossman, no writer of consequence has attempted to produce an equivalent of *War and Peace*, for that would have entailed an interpretation of history. This sort of ambition, apart from the notion of immodesty, has a corresponding paragraph in the Soviet Penal Code. Interpretation of history is the prerogative of the State and the Party, and a humble man will leave it right there. A humble man may also hope that the cumulative effect of many personal perspectives, of many stories told the way it was, may in the end amount to historical truth.

The sad thing, however, is that this process of accumulation suffers from going at a much slower pace than history itself. For while a personal perspective resorts to pen and paper, history for its vehicle uses ICBMs. In the final analysis, Russian prose – even the most honest prose – about the war fails the nation, for the best it can produce under the circumstances is a recognition of grief and of pride in the human ability to endure. That, especially the latter, might have been sufficient a century ago. Today this sentiment is of increasingly small comfort, and is shamelessly, with appetite, exploited by the State in its militaristic propaganda. Given its volume in the Soviet Union (which is in proportion only to its actual arsenal) the aforesaid sentiments, contrary to the writers' intentions, invite only doom.

State propaganda rubs the wounds of the nation with ghoulish intensity. Taking a cue from a line by Olga Bergolz (a Leningrad poet who survived the siege) which says "No one is forgotten and nothing is forgotten", it sets up hundreds and hundreds of war memorials across the country, organizes thousands-strong rallies for youngsters dressed in semi-military uniforms on the subject of this or that Second World War battle, produces every year scores of films and television shows about the endeavours of this or that army group or partisans behind enemy lines, finds and exhumes entire wartime graves, and reburies the remains of unknown and known soldiers with semi-religious pomp and ceremony, puts on vast displays of obsolete – now dating from the 1950s and 1960s – military hardware attended by guards of honour combining real soldiers and young Pioneers. All that to the constant tum-tum in the press and on the radio about the American threat, and all that in the name of peace.

If one keeps in mind that it is all geared for internal consumption, one may conclude that the peace-loving State tries to quell its bloodthirsty nation, or that the peace-loving nation is seized by nostalgia for its heroic past. Neither is correct. If there is any nostalgia, it is that of the State for the only time it enjoyed a true rapport with the nation, for the only time about which it has true reasons to brag. At least on the visual and aural plane, the State simply wants to reconstruct this rapport in order to assure itself that, should the rub come, there will be a patriotic upsurge and unanimity in action. That is understandable, but as an aspiration it is obsolete. Should the rub come, it will be too late for either patriotism or unanimity. Given the context of the modern world, not to mention modern warfare, the Socialist *Polizeistaat* is in itself the largest *memento mori* for its people.

This is what Russian war literature has failed to bring itself to admit, in spite of all the evidence the Second World War has provided it with. The state propaganda which blames German imperialism for the outbreak of war, and warns against American imperialism as the cause of the next war, on and with the same frequency, doesn't help very much either, and deliberately confuses issues. It wasn't German imperialism that got the Second World War started, it was German National Socialism – a phenomenon that neither in spirit nor in letter was that much different from Stalin's concept of "building socialism in one country". German imperialism was responsible for the First World War. If the world "imperialism" is so dear to the ears of the Kremlin Politburo members, they had better look it up in the dictionary. Short of that, a glance at the Afghan mirror may suffice.

Wars that affect the fate of civilizations are nearly always wars between a version of democracy and a version of tyranny. This is true of the Peloponnesian Wars; it could also be argued about the Napoleonic Wars, and about the First World War. The last was an exception; the next may prove the rule. It would be far better for the modern world to study rather than to make history. The differences whose resolution requires bloodshed are seldom of a pragmatic nature (markets, trade routes, raw materials etc); they are of an ideological nature: creeds, nationalism, this or that philosophical "ism". It is therefore in the sphere of human intellect that arsenals should be built, and discussions in Geneva should first of all be ideological discussions. Utopian as this may sound, the results may be more tangible. Literature in general and Russian literature in particular may gain no less than the readers.

It is true that over the last four decades, the stylistic nature of Russian prose hasn't advanced very much, and on that score the Russians in Geneva may lose out a bit to *From Here to Eternity*, *The Naked and the Dead*, and even to *The Young Lions*. However, in terms of intensity of sentiment, in terms of horrendousness of detail, in terms of hopelessness of the individual's predicament in the course of that war, Russian war prose, in whatever translation, stands to win hands down, though one is unlikely to feel pride for that sort of superiority. Perhaps precisely because of falling short of – or rather because of being kept away from – uncomfortable conclusions and modern narrative techniques, this prose manages to stay palpably close to the immediacy of individual tragedy.

A far more universal job is done, naturally, by poetry, if only because the tragic timbre pertains so much to the medium itself, as a mark of its greater affinity, or familiarity (compared to prose) with a finale, a last line. It is for this reason that poetry fares worse in a society with a predominantly positive, life-affirming tenor. The Second World War brought to Russia a huge crop of poets who, given a more lenient cultural climate, could have changed drastically the tune the nation presently marches to. That wasn't on the cards, however, and to mention the names of Semyon Gudzenko, Alexander Tvardovsky, David Samoilov, Arseny Tarkovsky, Anatoly Mezhirov, Sergey Narovchatov, Yevgeny Vinokurov is to mention the voices deafened by the drum of the State, as well as to object to the current level of translation of poetry into English.

Yet there are two voices that can pierce through both obstacles: first, because of the quality of the subject-matter; second, because of that and the innovative aspects of their verse. The first belongs to Semyon Lipkin, the second to Boris Slutzky.

It is Slutzky who has almost single-handedly changed the diction of post-war Russian poetry. His verse is a conglomeration of bureaucratese, military lingo, colloquialisms and sloganeering, and it employs with equal ease assonance, dactylic and visual rhymes, sprung rhythm and vernacular cadences. The sense of tragedy that his poems convey frequently extends, almost against his own will, from the concrete and historical to the existential: where every tragedy, in the end, belongs. This poet indeed speaks the language of the twentieth century; and it is regrettable that he is less available in English than his often witless successors who rather shamelessly exploit his formal discoveries. His tone is tough, tragic and nonchalant – the way a survivor normally talks, if he cares to, about what, or into what, he survived.

Yet if on the whole Russian war literature is not up to modern stylistic standards, so much the better. For there is something distinctly erratic about the very notion of a good literature about war. Such a notion in the end implies a certain ratio between the quality of war and one's writing style. Knowing a writer's ambitions, one should hope there is no such thing. It could be argued that any writing about war, and good writing especially, is essentially self-serving since it caters to the taste of survivors, or to that of indifferent posterity, thereby betraying the dead who are always perceived by the living as a minority. A small war, perhaps, may yield a decent narrative, for its events can somehow avail themselves to the human grasp. A nightmare like the Second World War with its hecatombs obliterates one's ability to respond adequately. In this sense alone, the performance of Russian poets and writers may be regarded not only as fair but as prophetic as well: the next war, should it take place, will produce no literature.

Britain and America

John Keegan

War is the international industry of the Anglo-Saxons. The English and the Americans have each fought a civil war and have twice fought each other. Otherwise their war-making has been exclusively for export, and very profitable too. At the cost of maintaining an army rarely larger than 200,000 men, Britain acquired between 1700 and 1900 the greatest empire in world history. Between 1941 and 1945 the United States, at a price of 390,000 war dead – the Soviet Union's dead for the same period are computed at 20 million – became the greatest power ever known. There are no other countries that can show a similar return on so small an outlay of blood and treasure.

The tradition of cheap victory has closely determined the way in which Britons and Americans have written about war, even – indeed particularly – when that tradition has been interrupted, as it was for the Americans during their Civil War and for the British during the Great War. In France, Russia and the lands of Central Europe, countries many times invaded, in which the army is a major national institution, and military service an almost universal obligation, the literary convention is to portray war as a corporate experience, affecting the life of the nation and of all who belong to it. The Anglo-Saxon convention, on the other hand, is intensely individualistic and reportorial, for the good reason that it is as the reporter of distant events that most Anglo-Saxons have written. The convention is reinforced by the voluntary principle that has underlain the military systems of both countries; the sea, allowing each country – in the words of Francis Bacon – "to take as much or as little of a war as it will", has permitted individuals to do the same.

Voluntarism explains a great deal of the gusto with which the soldier's lot has been described, from *Henry V* to the breezy memoirs of the Peninsular veterans, which began to appear contemporaneously with the sea novels of Captain Marryat. It was an ethos to which the lyrical poets not unnaturally objected. Wordsworth's response, his liberal passions vying with his sensitivity, was sometimes confused; not so Coleridge's:

> Boys and girls,
> And women, that would groan to see a child
> Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
> The best amusement for our morning meal!

> As if the soldier died without a wound;
> As if the fibres of this godlike frame
> Were gored without a pang . . .
> "Fears in Solitude", 1798

Walt Whitman, who worked as a dresser in a Northern military hospital during the Civil War, could echo the same sentiment in poems like "Beat! Beat! Drums" and "Come up from the Fields Father":

> See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.
> Alas poor boy, he will never be better . . .
> But the mother needs to be better,
> She with thin form presently dressed in black
> By day her meals untouched, then at night fitfully sleeping, often waking,
> In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing,
> O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life escape and withdraw,
> To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

The pity of war was a theme that motivated writers as unlike each other as Herman Melville (*Ball's Bluff*, a reverie on the murderous battle of October 1861) and Stephen Crane, whose *Red Badge of Courage* is among the earliest attempts by a novelist at the imaginary recreation of the reality of battle. He had learnt all he knew of war, he said, on the football field of Yale, and he did not like what he knew.

But while American authors, with the horrors of the Civil War close behind them, were dedicating themselves to a deprecation of the military virtues, British writers, at the heart of a burgeoning empire won with the blood of guttersnipes and squireens, were exulting in them. The exultation was almost entirely vicarious for, while poets in the chivalric tradition like Donne, Lovelace and Rochester had all been soldiers, the glorifiers of the Thin Red Line – Tennyson, Kipling, Newbolt – had not.

Kipling's case is particularly interesting. In his literary life he both sought for and achieved a quite remarkable level of military realism, whether in prose or in verse. *The Light That Failed*, though an unsuccessful novel, is a brilliant penetration of the soldier's world, and poems like "Snarleyow" contain utterly horrifying indications of what is inflicted on the human body on the battlefield. To his personal life, however, he seemed unable to bring any of the insight that illuminated what he wrote at his desk. Thus, though his son, John, was so short-sighted as to be unfit for military service, he used his influence to procure him a commission in the Irish Guards at the outbreak of the First World War. It was only after the inevitable outcome – John was killed on his first day in action – that the implications of what he had brought about began to torment him.

The torment was to persist to the end of his life in 1936. A similar thread of anguish runs through the flood of memoirs and novels of the First World War, many published by its poets – notably Sassoon, Graves and Blunden – about twelve years after its ending. The length of the interval may have had a biorhythmic significance, in that it took perhaps that long for the war's assault on the senses to translate itself into vision. The assault had been all the more brutal, of course, because of the idealistic innocence in which British temporary officers had entered the trenches. Tennyson and Newbolt had done their work; but so, too, had muscular Christians like Charles Kingsley whose exhortations that well-bred young men should offer moral leadership to the working class found their first real room for expression in the training camps of the Kitchener armies.

Sassoon describes the pang he felt at the loss of trust given him by his soldiers as he moved among them to inspect their feet after a route march. His realization, and that of his contemporaries, that by no exercise of their responsibility could they prevent their men, in Churchill's phrase, being "blown into bloody rags" almost fully explains the violent outrage of English First World War poetry. The violence of the emotion undergone – whether it found literary expression or not – further explains the curiously listless and un-outraged quality of British writing about the Second World War. The British were a desperately tired people by 1939, in mind as well as body, and the literature of 1939–45 reflects that exhaustion.

Not so the Americans. The wounds of the Civil War had been healed within two generations, and were not re-opened by the First World War, to which the leading American writers – Dos Passos, Cummings, Hemingway – all went as Red Cross volunteers. It was the reportorial mood that informed what they wrote. Much passion remained, therefore, to be stirred by the experience of 1939–45 which, if it did not kill many Americans, exposed over 12 million of them to a system of subordination and autocracy entirely alien to American values. In 1939 the US Army ranked forty-fifth in size in the world. Meeting it – or the navy or the marines – at first hand generated a sort of culture shock that produced four of the most remarkable, as well as successful, American novels of the post-war years, *The Caine Mutiny*, *The Naked and the Dead*, *The Thin Red Line* and *Catch-22*.

But war itself, rather than its institutions, does not seem to have shocked the American psyche as the Great War did the British. The occasion for that shock lay in the future, during the Vietnam years, when a war that was not a success story, fought for reasons that muddled rather than united the American electorate, prompted its veterans – notably Herr and Caputo – to a violence of protest that, in intensity if not in quality of language, recalls the outpourings of the British trench veterans of the 1920s and 30s.

There is, then a curious congruence about the war literature of Britain and America. Neither country has produced a *Radetzky marsch* or a *Servitude et grandeur militaires*, and certainly not a *War and Peace*. Nothing in their national experience has prescribed that they should. But witness to the individual's reaction to arbitrary violence and the illiberality of military values abound in English and American writing. It is a distinctively Anglo-Saxon contribution to the literary vision of the way the world works, and one of the highest quality and value.

Japan

Donald Keene

The Japanese have long been known as a warlike people. For most of their history, however, contacts with other countries were limited by geographical isolation, and in place of the wars between nations that enliven the pages of European history, there were mainly struggles between rival clans, the most bitter of which (in the fifteenth century) were fought for reasons that are almost incomprehensible today. During the years of the Tokugawa shogunate (1600–1867) Japan enjoyed a peace unbroken except by minor incidents, and it has only been since the country was opened to the world by outside pressure that Japan has come to figure in major warfare. The martial reputation of the Japanese is by no means an illusion, but it should be remembered that for centuries at a time there was no warfare worth mentioning.

War figures in Japanese literature, especially of the medieval period, but not nearly so conspicuously as in the literatures of Europe. The *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters), the oldest Japanese text, presented to the court in AD 712, contains accounts of gods and men who won prodigious victories over their enemies, but the most memorable parts of this mixture of myth and proto-history are the accounts of the capricious behaviour of the gods and the romances of mortals, not the battles.

The *Man'yōshū* (Collection for Ten Thousand Ages), compiled about 770, is generally considered to be the finest anthology of Japanese poetry. Its tone has often been characterized as being "masculine" in contrast to the more delicate poetry of later anthologies, and the "spirit of the *Man'yōshū*" was frequently invoked during the years of the Pacific War as the essence of all that is truly Japanese. One refrain was quoted especially often:

> At sea may my body be water-soaked,
> On land may it be with grass overgrown,
> Let me die by the side of my sovereign!
> Never will I look back.

These lines are identified within the poem as the sentiments which inspired the poet's ancestors, but the poets of the *Man'yōshū* who actually went off to war, usually as guards on the frontier, were by no means so warlike. Their poems express not the resolution of men determined to defend their country against savages, nor joy that they are able to offer their lives to their sovereign, but painful regret over leaving their families:

> My wife and children gathering about here and there,
> Wailed like the birds of spring.
> Their sleeves all wet with weeping.
> They tugged me by the hand to retain me;
> And loath to part, they followed after me.
> But in dread obedience to the imperial command
> I started out on the road,
> Looking back many times from the corner of each hill.

The poetry and prose of the Heian period (the tenth to twelfth centuries) contain few references to war, reflecting the peaceful state of the country. The members of the court, devoted to aesthetic pursuits, evinced little interest even in the most serious military disturbance of the time, the revolt of Taira no Masakado in 940. An account of the campaign is the oldest surviving example of the martial tale, a genre that became important two centuries later; but one would search in vain in the best works of the period, *The Tale of Genji* and *The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon*, for mention of this or any other conflict. The poets of the time described the changing beauties of the seasons, their unhappy (or, rarely, happy) love affairs, the uncertainty of life. The son of the general who was sent to subdue Masakado addressed a farewell poem to his mistress, but it did not allude to the mission ahead; it assures the lady that every night he puts on the cloak she gave him his longing for her will intensify. The man on his way to the battle-front in the north took every opportunity to send the lady letters describing his misery over their separation. He died of illness before he could reach the scene of the fighting, and the lady, reading his last letter, composed a poem lamenting that her long waiting for him had been in vain. Not a word was said about the warfare.

Other examples could be cited to show that although many men died fighting rebels and other unruly elements, there was a marked distaste for violence. (It might be noted that capital punishment was virtually unknown in the Heian period.) A celebrated story from the collection *Konjaku Monogatari* (Tales of Long Ago), compiled in the twelfth century, described the most admired kind of hero: Yasumasa, though renowned for his skill with the sword and the bow, chose not to use them in overcoming an armed robber. Instead, he continued to play his flute tranquilly as he walked along a deserted road in the moonlight, overpowering the robber every time he prepared to charge against him by calmly turning his face in the man's direction. The power of culture to subdue brute force was so congenial a theme that the story of Yasumasa is celebrated. In another well-known story from this collection two enemies are so impressed by each other's martial skill that they decide not to fight any further, and become friends.

Two important disturbances shattered the peace of Japan in the twelfth century. Both eventually inspired accounts of the fighting of a more or or less conventional nature, but the struggle, lasting from 1180 to 1185, between the Heike and the Genji, the two great military clans, was celebrated in one of the major works of Japanese literature, *The Tale of the Heike*. The work traces in poetic prose the rise to power of the Heike, the arrogance of its leader, the tyrant Kiyomori, and the eventual downfall of the clan after three great battles with the Genji. Incidents in the warfare are described with the verve one expects in accounts of heroic doings, but the tone of *The Tale of the Heike* is set not by the deeds of bravery nor by the brilliant strategies of generals but by the sorrow of defeat.

The most affecting episode of the work describes the death of Atsumori, a young Heike general. After their defeat at the battle of Ichinotani, the Heike were fleeing to the shore in the hopes of escaping to their ships. Kumagai, a Genji warrior, caught sight of an enemy officer mounted on a splendid horse and called to him, urging him to return and fight. The Heike warrior at once turned his horse around and the two men engaged in combat. Kumagai hurled the other man to the ground, then tore off his helmet and face-protector, intending to behead him, when he discovered that he had before him a young nobleman not more than sixteen years old. The youth so resembled his own son that Kumagai decided to spare him. He asked the youth his name, but the latter demanded that Kumagai identify himself first. On hearing his name, the youth insolently responded, "You've made a good catch. Take my head and show it to some of my side. They'll tell you who I am." Kumagai still wished to save the youth, thinking how his father would grieve to learn that he had been killed, but other Genji soldiers rode up. He said to the young man, "If you must die, let it be by my hand. I will see to it that prayers are said for your rebirth in paradise." The young warrior, expressing not a word of gratitude, curtly answered, "Cut off my head at once!" Kumagai at last steeled himself and cut off the youth's head, crying, "What life is so hard as that of a soldier? Only because I was born in a warrior family I must suffer this affliction! How sad it is to do such cruel deeds!" From this time on, we are told, Kumagai's mind was turned towards the religious life. In the Nō play *Atsumori*, based on this episode in *The Tale of the Heike*, Kumagai, who has become a Buddhist priest, meets the ghost of his enemy Atsumori, whose resentment over his defeat compels him to return again and again to this world; Kumagai's prayers in the end win salvation and release for his enemy.

The theme of the sadness of being born into a military family appears often in the war stories. The pride of being descended from a line of great warriors is much less commonly mentioned. The most celebrated Japanese military heroes, as Ivan Morris pointed out in his *The Nobility of Failure*, are men who, though at first successful, die frustrated and defeated. Soldiers who to the end were victorious have been admired but not loved.

The infrequency of references to warfare in the poetry can be explained in terms of the declaration by the poet Fujiwara Teika that the banners of war were no concern of his. But one would have expected *some* literary reaction to the two attempted Mongol invasions of Japan in the thirteenth century, the second repelled with the aid of the *kamikaze*, or divine wind vouchsafed by the Japanese gods. The tone of the poetry undoubtedly grew darker, and death rather than separation became the occasion for lamentation, but of warfare there are only the most distant echoes.

The period from the middle of the fifteenth to the end of the sixteenth century was marked by almost incessant warfare, ending with the unification of the country. Allusions to the fighting are found in literary works, but often so indirectly that one might miss them. In 1567, a year of desperate struggle, the poet Jōha decided to make an excursion to Mount Fuji. One night he was awakened by noises and, getting up from bed, could see that the castle at Nagashima had been taken and many fires now raged. He composed the poem: "A traveller's pillow / I had set forth on a path of dreams / But now I shall spend / This night of autumn moonlight / In a village of pine winds." Unless the reader knew the background of this poem he could hardly guess its inspiration.

During the years of the Tokugawa period the absence of warfare seems to have inspired nostalgia for the heroic deeds of the past. On the Kabuki stage especially, the great heroes thundered and postured, giving audiences a vicarious experience of war. The vendetta carried out by the loyal retainers of the Lord of Akō, though not strictly an act of warfare, stirred Japanese by a display of martial virtues in an even more conspicuous manner than works that were based on actual warfare.

The first international war fought by the Japanese since the time of the Mongols, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5 surprised the world by the easy victory of the Japanese, confirming their reputation for martial valour, but it occasioned no literature of worth. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 was much more costly for the Japanese, and after the victory the prevailing emotion expressed in the literature was disillusion rather than joy. The best-known poem by General Nogi, the chief Japanese officer, spoke of his shame towards the fathers of the soldiers of his command who had fallen, and asked at the conclusion, "To our song of victory today, how many men return?"

The wars in China of the 1930s were described in many works of journalism, notably Hino Ashihei's *Earth and Soldiers*, *Wheat and Soldiers*, etc. Even Hino, who liked to picture himself as an ordinary soldier ready to give up his life for his country, conveyed something of the sadness of the war and indeed shock over atrocities he had witnessed. The Pacific War was still more widely commemorated. For the first time in the history of Japanese literature there were poems and stories filled with hatred for the enemy. Post-war critics have preferred not to discuss such works or have excused them by saying that writers had no choice but to express such sentiments.

The only works to have come out of that war which are likely to survive are those written after the defeat, in the traditional Japanese tones of grief over war. The hatred of war found in Ōoka Shōhei's novels about his experiences in the Philippines may be the most lasting monuments of wartime literature, though the novel *Black Rain* by Ibuse Masuji, describing the effects of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, reveals in an even more affecting manner the suffering the whole Japanese people had experienced in the most modern of their wars.

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The diplomacy of two island empires 1894–1907 by Ian H. Nish, first published in 1966, has been reissued with a new preface (420pp. Athlone. £25. 0 485 13139 0). Professor Nish's new book, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (274pp. Longman. Paperback, £6.95. 0 582 49114 2), will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.

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Ancient Greece

Oswyn Murray

In the earliest surviving representation of Western society, the Shield of Achilles, Hephaistos the divine craftsman creates "two beautiful cities of mortal men". One is the city of peace, symbolized by the wedding procession and the lawsuit; the other is the city at war, under siege. The besiegers cannot decide whether to burn the city to the ground or to divide everything in it between themselves. In the meantime a battle rages: "Strife and Confusion join in, and the foul spirit of Death drags one man fresh wounded, another unwounded, another dead through the crowd by his feet. The cloak on her shoulders is dripping with the blood of men" (*Iliad* 18.490–530).

To the Greeks from the beginning war is a natural state, as natural as peace. Only in some distant primeval golden age before society and before culture could war not have existed. War lies at the basis of Greek society as of all other successful societies: the Greek city state is a community of warriors, whose political rights are determined by the fundamental privilege of the soldier to decide his own fate. There is a direct line of descent from the Homeric warrior assemblies to the Athenian naval democracy; the franchise is normally restricted in some sense to "those bearing arms" (hence the exclusion of women); and, as Aristotle pointed out, the constitution reflects the military needs of the state: in an age of cavalry the government is aristocratic, in an age of infantry a moderate democracy, while a city dependent on sea power will be controlled by the rowers, "the naval mob".

So war, being natural, is not a moral problem. All wars are equal, whether they are in self-defence or for the purpose of enslaving others. Between Greek states, war should properly be announced (an "unheralded war" may offend the gods, despite its obvious advantages); and some attempt to enlist the gods on one's side is desirable, whether by obtaining an oracle, or alleging a mythical right to enemy territory, or inventing a religious crime which the enemy will not expiate. But these are religious preparations for war rather than real causes, and have no moral dimension. The Athenian democracy can defend the freedom of the Greeks against the barbarians in a continuation of the Persian Wars, and turn that defence into a weapon for enslaving the Greeks: the formal definition of justice as "the interest of the stronger" in the late fifth century follows on its practical demonstration. This freshness of approach, this Machiavellianism, most clearly enunciated in the history of Thucydides, has always attracted modern thinkers who believe that a little realism would make all our problems simpler. Yet behind this apparently primitive concept of war as a natural phenomenon lies a deeper problem, of the relationship of the individual to war and so to his community.

For war is also the negation of human and social values: it brings death and pain to both sides. There is no place for pity or sparing the vanquished:

> Father Zeus has reserved for my old age a terrible fate; I shall see many evils, my sons killed, my daughters dragged away, their marriage beds defiled, their babies dashed to the ground by the savage enemy, my son's wives dragged off by foul Greek hands; and myself at the last torn to pieces by savage dogs before the gate, when the sharp bronze of sword or spear shall lay me dead: those dogs which I raised in my halls and fed at my table to guard the house, will lie at the gates maddened by drinking my blood. A young man, when he lies killed in battle, struck by the sharp bronze, looks beautiful though he is dead. But when an old man is killed, and the dogs defile his grey hair and his grey beard and tear his genitals, that is the most pitiful thing a mortal can suffer (*Iliad* 22.59–76).

So speaks Priam as he watches his son Hector being hunted to his death by the maddened Achilles before the walls of Troy. It was Simone Weil who first pointed out that the *Iliad* is unlike any other epic of war in basing itself on the suffering and helplessness of man, on the way that war emphasizes that gulf of mortality that separates man from his gods.

The values of the *Iliad* are those of an aristocratic warrior class seeking "always to be best and superior to others". War is therefore a field of honour, and it is a sense of his individual excellence (*arete*) which leads a warrior to display himself; his obligation to his society is contained in the recognition of his status as aristocrat:

> Glaucus, why are we two especially honoured with seats of honour and meat and full cups, in Lycia, and everyone looks on us as gods, and we possess a great *temenos* by the banks of the Xanthus, fair orchards and wheat-bearing fields? Now we must stand with the first of the Lycians and face fiery battle, so that the Lycians in their thick breastplates may say, "Our nobles that rule in Lycia are great men, they eat fat sheep and drink the best honey-sweet wine. But they are powerful men, for they fight with the first of the Lycians" (*Iliad* 12.310–21).

If the warrior thinks of others, it is primarily of his immediate kin:

> Whoever of you is wounded or struck and meets death and his fate, let him die: it is not unseemly for him to die fighting for his fatherland; but his wife and children after him are safe and his house and land unharmed, if only the Achaeans return to their dear fatherland in their ships (*Iliad* 15.494–9).

If it is "not unseemly" to die for one's community, equally it is not in itself a virtuous act, since virtue consists in success. Here lies the tragedy of war for Homer: death in battle is tragic because it is a necessary failure: no reason for fighting, however good, can outweigh the individual loss in death.

Around the end of the eighth century BC came that fundamental breakthrough in military technology which created and sustained the classical city state: the Greeks developed a heavy infantry armour which involved also a change of tactics, in which masses of troops with shields interlocked fought in close combat: victory went, not to the bravest, but to the most numerous, the most cohesive and the most disciplined group. One reason for the success of this style of warfare lay in the security it offered the combatants. Casualties were amazingly light, especially against less well armed forces; even between two similarly trained forces, defeat meant that the formation of one side broke: they fled, and, in the absence of cavalry, pursuit was difficult without running the risk of breaking one's own formation and seeing the enemy reform. Victory consisted in occupying the battlefield and setting up a trophy, giving back the enemy dead under truce. Since such armies were fundamentally unsuited to siege warfare and most cities were by now walled, the ultimate price of failure in war, the final destruction of the city, became rare. Warfare was institutionalized; fighting became confined to suitable battlefields and suitable seasons, the outcome was almost predictable. It was not until the fourth century that professional generals emerged to rethink the rules of war, and create more flexible tactics based on the manipulation of light-armed, heavy-armed and cavalry forces.

The interest of war lies not on the battlefield but in the social system that sustains the possibility of victory: soldiers are created in peacetime, and merely used in war. The Greek citizen army was in essence an expression of the Greek *polis*, its creation one of the chief concerns and one of the chief consequences of the formation of the state. The Homeric warrior group had expressed its difference from the community it protected by feasting and drinking together; similar customs were adapted in various cities to provide a suitably expanded basis for a citizen army. In Sparta the army was organized in mess groups which were substituted for the family as the basic element of the state. Another custom of the male drinking group, homosexuality, was developed and institutionalized, most systematically at Thebes in the fourth century, to create a Sacred Band of lovers fighting side by side. Such institutions served to create that sense of separateness and fellowship in peace which is a prerequisite of disciplined courage in war and of the willingness to risk death together.

The new class and the new method of fighting created a new moral code, expressed often in language similar to that of the old but fundamentally different. The earliest type of poetry to emerge from epic was created for this new situation: it is the poetry of military exhortation, addressed to the warrior group and sung probably at its ritual drinking sessions. No longer is it individual excellence that counts. Tyrtaeus at Sparta in the seventh century presents a new type of courage:

> For you know the destructive work of Ares, god of sorrow,
> you have experienced all the fury of painful war.
> You were with those who fled and with the pursuers, young men, you have had your fill of both.
> Those who dare, standing by one another,
> to join in the hand-to-hand fighting in the front line lose fewer men and protect the people behind:
> when they flinch the courage (*arete*) of all is perished.
> (Fragment 11)

Moreover death on the battlefield is no longer a tragic event, at best "not unseemly": now "To die is glorious, when a brave man falls among the front ranks fighting for his fatherland." So was born "the old lie, *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*".

To the soldier of the *polis* warfare is a question of group solidarity, of loyalty first to his companions and then to his city; his death is subordinated to the greater glory of the *polis*. The public funeral which Athens granted those of her citizens killed in war centres on a speech in praise, not of the dead but of their city, whose glory is maintained by those who give themselves for her; they should not be mourned for they will be remembered as those who made the necessary sacrifice.

So war, being both necessary and glorious, ceases to be tragic. Yet that earlier view is never quite lost. It remains in the recognition that all wars involve failure, for the community as much as for the individual. "Most cities which were great once are small today; and those which used to be small have been great in my time. Knowing therefore that human prosperity never abides long in the same place, I shall pay attention to both alike", says Herodotus; and the later books of Thucydides are an expression of this sense of tragic destiny. Moreover the problem of Priam remains; in this march of history the non-combatant continues merely to suffer: Euripides especially revives the Homeric pathos of the victim of the world of honour. For all its military base, Greek culture never made the mistake of glorifying war for its own sake: the Homeric view of war as merely a part of life was confirmed in the experience of a citizen army which fought in order to enjoy the fruits of peace.

The Islamic world

Robert Irwin

"The sword is truer than what is told in books: in its edge is the separation between truth and falsehood": so the ninth-century Arab poet Abu Tammam claimed in disparagement of his own *métier*. Yet in fact warfare and literature have had a close relationship in the Islamic culture of the Near East, for not only did literature celebrate and regulate the practice of war, but a remarkably high proportion of the medieval and early modern warrior élite were literate. Poetry and prose shaped their thinking on war, and they in turn made notable contributions to Arabic, Turkish and Persian literature.

The tradition of the warrior poet goes back to *Jahili* or Pre-Islamic times in the Arabian Peninsula. The poets chronicled the "Days of the Arabs" – that is, the skirmishes and wars of the tribes – and they celebrated legendary single combats and the wreaking of blood vengeance. One of the most important parts of the Prophet Muhammad's mission in the seventh century was to bring such tribal wars to an end, but in practice the spread of Islam and Arab armies beyond the Arabian Peninsula merely diffused the tribal feuds more widely throughout the Near East and North Africa. Furthermore, the tribal boasting and martial exploits of the *Jahili* poets continued to furnish both literary and military men with an ideal of life. Abu Tammam himself made an anthology, the *Hamasa* or *Courage*, of real and alleged specimens of Pre-Islamic verse, and this poetry furnished both formal and thematic models for further productions. "Night and the horses and the Desert know me, / Also the sword and the guest and paper and the pen", as the tenth-century poet al-Mutanabbi has it, in superb pastiche of the Pre-Islamic Arab tradition of literary and military boasting. The twelfth-century hunting, shooting and fishing Arab Syrian gentleman Usamah Ibn Munquidh not only wrote poetry and prose about his encounters with crusaders, lions and leopards, but was reputed to know some 20,000 verses of Pre-Islamic poetry by heart. That an Arab like Usamah should be familiar with his cultural heritage is perhaps less surprising than that Usamah's contemporary Saladin, the Kurdish soldier of fortune and later Sultan, should also be a devotee of Pre-Islamic poetry, and Saladin too knew the *Hamasa* by heart. *Jahili* poetry furnished a chivalric ethic for free-born Muslim warriors.

By the twelfth century Arab warlords like Usamah were in a minority throughout most of the Islamic world. The Arabs had surrendered control of their destiny to a military élite of Kurds, Turks and Circassians. From the tenth century onwards Turkish mamlukes, or slave soldiers, were an almost omnipresent feature of Islamic political life. At times these mamlukes served Arab, Kurdish or Turkish dynasties. At other times, as in Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1517, they supplanted them and chose the rulers from their own ranks. Even so, in the Arab lands at least, Arabic not only continued to be the language in which war was celebrated; it also remained the language of the theoretical treatises on strategy, horsemanship and *Jihad* (Holy War), and these treatises found an audience in the new Turkish military caste.

The mamluke barracks provided an effective environment for the disciplining of young white slaves and their training in both the arts of war and government. The young mamluke was also instructed in the doctrines of Islam and taught to speak and read Arabic. The teaching was not always effective. The number of surviving medieval manuscripts in Arabic on archery is large by comparison with Western materials on the subject. Indeed some mamlukes actually contributed to the extensive literature of warfare that was produced in Egypt and Syria between 1250 and 1517.

Arab civilians and Turkish soldiers combined to contribute to a genre of writing known as *furusiyya*, literally the literature of horsemanship, but by extension the literature of instruction about horse archery, lance play, swordsmanship and, by further extension, all the military skills. Some *furusiyya* manuals covered grand strategy, others tackled chess and wrestling. As may already be apparent, *furusiyya* literature was a curious amalgam. It drew on many pre-existing genres of literature. In the first place it drew upon religious and legal treatises about Holy War. In Islamic theory there was no such thing as a legitimate war directed against Muslims. Whatever the realities of political life in the later Middle Ages, the only wars it was virtuous to discuss were those against the infidel. Few, if any, manuals of *furusiyya* were produced that were not prefaced by an exhortation to the *Jihad* against the infidel, and generally, the literature was pervaded by a certain religiosity. For example the fourteenth-century master archer, Taybagha al-Yunani, advocated the performance of ritual ablutions and *rakats* of the prayer before commencing archery practice. (However "Islam in the Art of Archery" does not seem to have gone further than this.) Similarly the late thirteenth-century mamluke emir and spearmaster, Baktut al-Rammah, in his treatise on *furusiyya* urged his readers to dedicate themselves to the Holy War by performing *rakats* of the prayer, and immersing themselves in the sea before taking what seems almost to have been a vow of Islamic knighthood.

A small number of battles in the first century of Islam, among them the Prophet's victory at Badr against the Arabs of Mecca (624) and the Arab victory against the Sassanian Persians at Qadisiyya (636), furnished a storehouse of moral and tactical examples for Muslim thinking about war. But so too did the individualistic exploits of the heroes of *Jahili* Arabia and the legendary exploits of the Kings and warriors of Pre-Islamic Persia. Compilers of *furusiyya* manuals went on to plunder anecdotes from *adab* (*belles-lettres*) for further material of a vaguely military nature. The Arab genre of literature devoted to *hiyal* (guile or trickery) has no very close parallel in European literature. In Islamic literature it covered a spectrum of behaviour from the deceits of confidence tricksters and conjurors to the wise stratagems of princes. *Hiyal* literature fed into *furusiyya* literature, and in some manuals, such as al-Harawi's *Memoir on Military Stratagems*, more space was devoted to advising the police on how to achieve the results of a successful war without actually fighting one than was given to discussing the management of battles. From a twentieth-century perspective, and in the light of R. C. Smail's and John Gillingham's researches on the nature of Muslim–Crusader warfare, which emphasize the importance of keeping an army in the field but point out the value of avoiding battle if at all possible, we may think that this shows a certain realism on the part of al-Harawi. Arab writers, desperate to pad out their manuals of war, also drew upon the interrelated genres of occultism and of ingenious mechanical contrivances. Speculative recipes for the production of poisonous gases and burning mirrors, based often on Arab translations of Pre-Islamic late Hellenistic works, appear in *furusiyya* literature. Astrology might be useful for determining an auspicious day for battle. The semi-occult science of physiognomy was offered as an aid for checking the troop musters.

When al-Aqasara'i came to treat of the deployment of troops in the field, he did not ask a mamluke army commander how this was done. Instead, what seemed to be the relevant portion of an Arab translation of Aelian's second-century Greek treatise, the *Tactica*, was copied out. Mamluke manuals of warfare do at times draw on the direct experience of soldiers in the wars against the Crusaders and the Mongols, and many manuals discuss the management of horse and bow in severely practical detail. Nevertheless, it must be apparent that there is a certain lack of realism in the genre as a whole and, where the genre is realistic, it is in the detail and only in the detail. We know more about the Muslim archer's thumb-ring than we do about the considerations that might have influenced his general in battle.

A small body of similar *furusiyya* literature was produced in Muslim Spain and North Africa, but not in Ottoman Turkey nor in Safavid Persia. Mamluke *furusiyya* literature was almost without parallel. It was also without successor. In the centuries that followed, no Machiavelli, no Clausewitz and no Mantran appeared in the Near East. The fourteenth-century North African historian and philosopher Ibn Khaldun, in his treatise on the underlying principles of history, the *Muqaddima*, had deplored the failure of contemporary Maghribi armies to fight in line and closed formation. Although Ibn Khaldun's meditations on the causes of social and military decay in Islamic society were to be taken up by later Ottoman thinkers, still it did not give rise to anything more than a small body of literature of complaint and advice addressed to the Turkish Sultan. It took the severe practical shock of the arrival of the French under Bonaparte in Egypt in 1798 and their set-piece demonstration of what fire-power and discipline could do at the Battle of Inbaba to stimulate the production, from the early nineteenth century onwards, of a new wave of military manuals. This time, however, the treatises on warfare did not draw on *Jahili* and Islamic exemplars. Rather they followed Western models and indeed in most cases they were simply translations of Western manuals.

Under the pressure of European colonialism in the nineteenth century the literature of *Jihad* experienced a certain revival. *Jihad* terminology and treatises were employed by the followers of 'Abd al-Qadir in his revolt against the French in Algeria in the 1830s and 40s. The Mahdist movement in the Sudan similarly invoked the *Jihad*. But the literature that emerged in these anti-colonial wars was a literature of exhortation to struggle and pious commitment; nothing specific in the way of strategy or tactics followed from it. Broadly speaking, the same has remained true in this century. In the Algerian struggle against the French in the 1950s and 60s, the FLN guerrillas called themselves *fedayeen* (devotees) and their clandestinely circulated newspaper *al-Mujahid* (Holy Warrior) referred to those who fell in the struggle as *shuhada'* (martyrs). But for practical models on how to conduct their war, the FLN looked to General Giap's conduct of the Viet Minh's war and to Castro's guerrillas in Cuba. The ideology and vocabulary of the *Jihad* of course survive in the struggles of the Palestinians, Iranians and others, but, since the fifteenth century, it has been detached from anything that can be deemed to be a specifically Islamic art of war.

Germany

J. P. Stern

Should the dead not be allowed to bury the dead? The farce played out over the graves of Bitburg may be distressing to the Federal Republic's friends abroad, who will feel a deep distaste at the spectacle of *all* the parties concerned turning homage to the dead into a political issue. Yet the occasion was no more than a particularly telling reminder that the past is not dead; that even today, forty years after the end of the Third Reich, the continuities established by Hitler and his henchmen have not been forgotten and, in free societies which do not exercise any control over the study of the past, cannot be forgotten. Those who are most ignorant of history's ghosts are most likely to conjure them up.

Continuities? One doesn't have to subscribe to the pseudo-religious doctrine of collective guilt (or to the ghastly rabbinical injunction, "Never forgive!") to recall that the war which ended forty years ago was not waged by Hitler's National Socialist Party but by the armed forces of the Greater German Reich, sworn to the leader of that Party. The troops which occupied Prague in the blizzard of an early morning in March 1939 were not "Nazis" but ordinary German infantry, and it was on these troops that the Gestapo officials who followed in their wake relied for their protection. The SS-men who committed the massacres at Oradour five years later lie side by side with those ordinary German soldiers and, apart from homage to the individual dead, there is no way of honouring the one group without honouring the other. When Himmler claimed the status of front-line soldiers for his SS murderers, he was exaggerating but not inventing the continuity which the régime had succeeded in establishing between its leadership on the one hand and the armed forces on the other, with the Waffen-SS acting as a convenient liaison.

To say all this is not to say that every member of the German forces was equally guilty – or that every member of the German public was equally aware – of the crimes perpetrated in their name. But it is to remind ourselves what our West German friends know anyhow, and the East Germans strenuously deny: that the war which modern Germany's most popular leader unleashed and directed was itself an immensely popular affair almost to the end. The question is not how "genuine" these sentiments (or indeed any other public sentiments in the Third Reich) really were, but how effective. No doubt a steadily increasing number of troops felt increasingly disillusioned about German war aims, and worried about the identification of party interests with national loyalties at which they were conniving. The Prussian officers' coup of July 20, 1944, was a desperate last-minute protest against that identification. But the narrow social base of that conspiracy makes it all too plain that the coup was never intended to be the opening move of a popular revolt. There is no reason for refusing credence to the régime on this point: Germany's aggressive war was as patriotic an affair as was the defensive war waged by Stalin's Russia.

But this popular war – popular, at all events, as long as the going was good – was also the paradigm of an unjust war. Why then should those who fought and died in it be honoured – honoured, that is, not for their individual lives and deaths but collectively? Seeing that one cannot honour soldiers collectively without honouring the cause for which they fought, this fortieth anniversary was an occasion, not for paying homage or for the grandiloquent talk of "tragedy", but for sorrow and sadness. It was Stefan George who, in the course of another war (1917), had the dignity to write of the unseemliness of triumph and of death undignified and unredeemed by talk of sacrifice:

> Zu jubeln ziemt nicht; kein triumf wird sein.
> Nur viele untergänge ohne würde . . .

The aggressive, warlike disposition of the Germans, which the National Socialist régime fostered but did not invent, has been described and argued over in countless historical, sociological and psychological investigations, and has been the theme of countless novels, poems and plays. The predominance, in that disposition, of the authoritarian personality with its "non-political", anti-libertarian outlook; the conspiracy of fear in the face of modern adversarial democracy (Ralf Dahrendorf's "Kartell der Angst"); the perverted religious values to which the régime appealed as well as the longing for destruction, sacrifice of others and of self: these are some of the hallmarks which set the Third Reich apart – largely but not wholly apart – from other countries and from Germany's own history.

In this complex of attitudes, war and the prospect and memory of war played a special role. War was glorified by the National Socialist régime and its public as a veritable feast of sacrifice and self-sacrifice; and in so doing the régime was reaping the harvest the literary men of the Great War generation had sown. For it was not only the third-rate hacks who had contributed to the penitential kitsch. It was Rainer Maria Rilke who, in three hymnic poems of August 1914, had invoked the war-god's gifts of suffering and pain as the means whereby modern man might achieve a new, full-blooded "reality"; Thomas Mann who spoke of the carnage as a holy sacrifice the Germans were called upon to make on behalf of European culture; Stefan George who, in the very poem from which I have quoted, demanded (in a hideous periphrastic imperative) the extermination of inferior races; Ernst Jünger who, in a series of fictionalized diaries, made "das Fronterlebnis" the touchstone of human authenticity.

This is part of the story of how war, regardless of victory or defeat but especially in defeat, came to be seen as bestowing on the Germans a seriousness and weightiness of experience others did not possess; how men shamelessly bared their injured minds, calling for a spiritualization and redemption beyond the individual, on a national scale; and how literature and philosophy were turned into an instrument drawing value from defeat like poison from a corpse.

Hence the special place which the commemoration of war had and still to some extent has in both parts of Germany; but that penitential syndrome of values derived from the warlike experience is no longer one of them. There are, among German post-war writers of any significance, no purveyors of sacrifice, no extollers of the value of suffering. The countless attempts at coping with the past which are a major theme in post-war literature may not always produce great writing, but they are not morally the worse for occasionally congealing into the clichés of "Vergangenheitsbewältigung"; qualms about the meaning of patriotism and the value of nationhood have brought about an "Identitätskrise" of wholly manageable proportions; and for one hideous monument to the Luftwaffe's past glory left standing on Crete there are now two generations of Germans to express their embarrassment at this tactlessness.

And literature? Instead of trotting out the great and famous names, let me pay homage to one Corporal Felix Hartlaub, a history student aged twenty-two, missing at the eastern gates of Berlin exactly forty years ago. He didn't leave much to posterity. Apart from a few poems and *novellen* and his PhD dissertation, there is only his war diary, *Von unten gesehen* (1950, "Seen from below"), the notes of a humble army clerk – a very mouse of a clerk – who has found a safe niche in the historical section of the Führer's special train. Typing away at the official war diary, he comments on the grotesque landscape that races on, country after country occupied and again abandoned, month after month of victory and defeat, past the windows of that ghostly train with its blue velvet upholstery, where coffee and real English marmalade are served and which is about to turn from a haven of privilege and comfort into a deadly mousetrap. Accurate, ironically distanced and superbly good at stylizing the momentous "historic" situation in a lacework of bureaucratic slang. Felix Hartlaub's "notes and impressions" make one of the first post-war books to offer a wholly new glimpse of the terrible past.

The Germans no longer think that inflicting suffering on others and on themselves is an ennobling experience. They remember the past and don't need reminding of it, least of all by buffoonery among their graves.

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Viewpoint: the resistant element

A. S. Byatt

When I was a child, war was the natural state of affairs. It was to blame for my father's absence, my mother's perpetual bad temper, the insufficiency and nastiness of food, the household gloom and an overall atmosphere of fear which I felt (and still feel) to be the human condition, unalterable. I was also, more specifically, taught hatred. I was trained to devour semolina to destroy Germans and Japanese. The rare eggshells we had, we carefully painted with a face – a lick of black hair, a cross mouth, a little black moustache. We then smashed these little fetishes and buried the shards in the rockery. I remember realizing one summer night that Germans were human beings – I must have been about five. I did not know what to do with this idea. It weighed on me, the strain of having possibly to worry about Germans as well as everything else. "Peace" seemed unlikely, if not impossible, a Land of Oz. When it came, nothing changed much, except that my father came back, which I had not expected. I don't think we saw him as a hero. He did have an air of having seen a great many things and places, Athens, Cairo, Naples, of having lived. He had a vocabulary of Air Force terms of abuse that sounded odd in his measured speech.

He was a reasonable and peaceful man, and sent me to a Quaker school, where I was taught tolerance, turning the other cheek, passive resistance and pacifism. Possibly because we were girls, we were not expected, I think, to dispute the obvious good sense and absolute moral value of these. We were not expected to have any combative or militaristic leanings; nor did we. Our most subtle discussions centred on the possible justice of fighting back against the perpetrators of the extermination camps. The whole weight of human history, what men were and had done, was heavy and unexamined. There was something facile, it seemed to my green self, about this absolute pacifist stance. The Quaker view of the world required a vision of mankind as a potentially passive and loving community of brothers and sisters in which I couldn't believe. At university I took to Hobbes's vision of men as equal and therefore quarrelsome, driven to it by Competition, Diffidence or Glory. "From Equality proceeds Diffidence. From Diffidence, Warre." Hobbes's world is ruled and constrained to safety by fear, as it is often argued our post-war world has been.

My thoughts about war, and the literature of war, have been a female attempt to understand by imagination what I don't know or feel by nature. I should like to distinguish between trying to understand cruelty and trying to understand the necessity and even the pleasure of fighting. The warlike virtues present a different problem from the pleasure in pulling wings off flies, or the pleasant nastiness of James Bond, or Sade's *Schadenfreude*, or even, in the end, the camps.

Shakespeare maps the use and abuse of the idea of Honour, from Hotspur's romantic magniloquence through Falstaff's wholesale rejection, to its use as a decisive means of social control and order through the calculating, and also heartfelt and stirring, military rhetoric of Henry V. My Quaker mentors might have liked Falstaff's brisk conclusion that honour is no surgeon and no use to the dead. But it is Falstaff who sees his men as "food for powder, food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better: tush man, mortal men, mortal men". Falstaff is the spirit of chaotic individualism, the questioning of all accepted order and not unrelated to Hamlet, who is aware that Fortinbras, like Hal, has a decisiveness drawn from a set of authoritative values which he himself lacks. "Rightly to be great / Is not to stir without great argument / But greatly to find quarrel in a straw / When Honour's at the stake." So, like Mrs Thatcher, Fortinbras marches off his men to take a small plot that is not tomb enough and continent to hide the slain. This is appalling and absurd, and we and Hamlet see it so, and yet it is how safety is preserved, the form of the play says, when Fortinbras briskly restores order after the bloodbath.

In Anthony Powell's *The Valley of Bones* Jenkins and Pennistone have a civilized conversation about Vigny's *Servitude et grandeur militaires*, that strange elegiac tribute by a peacetime professional soldier to the military virtues, which, Vigny says, are those of abnegation, of passive obedience to the cruel necessities of the army, of a certain orderly and childlike selflessness, which he depicts with gloomy sentiment and precision. Vigny has his own apostrophe to Honour, which he calls a "male religion, without symbol or images, dogma or ceremony". It is, he says, a bizarre and proud virtue, gaining its strength from the energy of men's vices themselves, a man-made, purely earthly virtue. A virtue, that is, of codified destruction. Vigny's fallen comrades died, he says, in battle, in duels, by suicide. It requires a great and still baffled effort of imagination now to see how anyone could accept the complicated code of honour in duelling, and yet much male courage and essential self-respect were expended for it. It is hard for me to imagine the satisfaction of being part of a happy few, a band of brothers, setting out to kill for national expansion.

One way of seeing war in literature is as a debate between this kind of male religion and what Clausewitz called friction, the excessive mess and muddle of war. War, said Clausewitz, is nothing but a duel on an extensive scale, "an act of violence intended to compel our adversary to fulfil our will". War is a trinity composed of "primordial violence, hatred and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force", of "the play of chance and probability in which the creative spirit is free to roam" and of "its element of subordination as an instrument of policy". Action in war is impeded by "friction", it is "movement in a resistant element. Just as the simplest and most natural movement, walking, cannot easily be performed in water, so in war it is difficult for normal efforts to achieve even moderate results." Writers on the whole have been drawn to describing the triumph of friction. Napoleonic battle in fiction, Tolstoy's Borodino, Stendhal's Waterloo, are images of random violent activity bogged down in mud and muddle. Prince Andrei speaks against the deadening effect of chivalry and codes of conduct in warfare but is possessed by a "latent heat" which Pierre observes, as he rushes around the battlefield, driving other men gleefully to a communal effort of slaughter. Such a heat is also felt by Guy Crouchback in Waugh's *Men at Arms*, at one with his regiment in the early stages, "a physical tingling and bristling, as though charged with galvanic excitement". This too I have to make a cold and ignorant effort to imagine.

Literary Napoleonic battles are seen by non-participants (Fabrice, Pierre) rushing frenzidly and absurdly from point to point. In the First World War the trenches become a bad and false infinity: friction swallows honour, which becomes malign. *Dulce et Decorum* is indecent. A whole generation of post-war schoolchildren and students has been over-exposed, in my view, to the literature of this war, to the poetry in the pity, to easy ideological stances which know war is evil and wrong but neglect to question how it came to be a part of our social behaviour. *Why* did they die as cattle? My students do not tell me, though they all have a dutiful paragraph on the homosexual emotions of soldier poets looking at the soft cheeks of dead boys. Ford Madox Ford's Tietjens, a huge out-of-date mammoth of English manhood, personifies honour floundering in the mud, battered by the din, trapped by the wire, of friction, facing both ways, hearing Hotspur's music and Falstaff's nihilism. But the emotions that are important to understand are those of Robert Graves in *Goodbye to All That* when he makes a huge moral effort to nullify Sassoon's pacifist gesture, when he tells Bertrand Russell that his troops would certainly shoot down striking munitions workers. Graves is clear about the pointlessness and indignity of prolonging the war, but the male virtues persist easily and attractively in him. Loyalty to his own men sends him back to the front, to observe with interest that a better-drilled troop is in fact more courageous in a bloody and expensive battle for a small wood. It is Graves who told us, not too long ago, that mankind needs a war every now and then, that the long peace has produced a restlessness.

Graves's practical acceptance of male pleasure in fighting is taken up in the Second World War by Keith Douglas in *Alamein to Zem Zem*, another exercise for the outsider's imagination, picking its delicate way between comic muddle, quick snapshots of violent death, and the sense of being part of a not wholly competent group purpose. Douglas takes and can write with such unthinking pleasure in his own energy. He ran away from a safe staff job to fight, and was killed in Normandy at the age of twenty-four.

Both Waugh and Powell, writing retrospectively, chart the tragi-comic downfall of honour in this war. Powell's Rowland Gwatkin has a romantic yearning to be Kipling's centurion, and meets his nemesis in Bithell, a walking parody of military values. Guy Crouchback's Sword of Honour is a rusty mail hung up in monumental mockery; his band of brothers are traitors, murderers and deceivers, possessed by the pervasive death wish; his gallant army is bureaucratic and muddled monster, as is Powell's, through which Widmerpool manages to kill off earlier rivals. Comic disillusion with the male virtues is a civilized alternative to horror of atrocities, and perhaps as potent in destroying battle-fervour. It becomes something else again, something savage and extreme, in *Catch-22* and *Slaughterhouse 5* where Falstaff is triumphant and the great human machine designed to order and use Clausewitz's primordial violence, hatred and enmity has become indistinguishably identified with them. "Someone is trying to kill me", says Yossarian. Vigny's codes have numbered his death, which like Falstaff, he intends to evade. "Thou owest God a death", says Hal. "'Tis not due yet, I would be loath to pay him before his day."

It is possible that our world has become civilized, or technologically sophisticated enough, for fear to have produced a peace which may change human, or male, nature so that Hobbes's analysis and Prince Hal's qualities may become redundant with the duellist's sense of honour. The Quakers named their Chair a Chair of Peace Studies, not Conflict Studies, and this may be not a euphemism but a new pragmatism. But I was an ingrained pessimist by nature before I became a half-hearted pacifist by nurture. We still live in Hobbes's world where "the nature of War consisteth not in actuall fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary. All other time is PEACE."

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FIFTY YEARS ON

The TLS *of May 16, 1935, carried a review of* The Fate of Man in the Modern World *by Nicholas Berdyaev, from which these extracts are taken:*

In this little volume, no less than in his larger works, M. Berdyaev stands out as a modern prophet chastising the present generation for its shortcomings and pointing the way to a better world. He believes we are living in an apocalyptic time, a time in which history itself is being judged, and his own words have an apocalyptic ring about them. With capitalism he has a deep quarrel, for it is anti-personal, it uses man as goods for sale and its life is lupine. And almost all the movements launched against capitalism since the War seem to him to accept the same attitude as that which characterizes both war and capitalism. Against the racial creed of Nazi Germany he inveighs strongly. "The German people," he asserts, "are in a state of collective insanity, resulting from the degradation and misfortune to which they have been subject." Nor does Russian Communism seem to him essentially different.

The central feature of modern life, in M. Berdyaev's eyes, is a process of dehumanization in all phases of culture and of social life. Man has ceased to have any value at all in many circles. Does this mean that we should revert to old humanism? Not in M. Berdyaev's opinion. He believes that humanism inevitably develops into anti-humanism, and he thinks the call is to a new and purer form of Christianity. The often has Christianity betrayed its mission . . . It has allowed the task of creating a more just and humane social order to fall into the hands of non-Christians.

Letters

'Alien Powers'

Sir, – In his review of Kenneth Minogue's *Alien Powers* (March 1), Alan Ryan argues that I and apparently some other Marxists like me are not to be "taken seriously" because – on the basis of a quote from my book *Alienation* – we blame capitalism for too much human misery and I even go so far as to consider vicarious living through the royal family and movie stars more degrading than life in the Gulag. This does sound irresponsible . . . until one has a look at the context from which the few disconnected sentences quoted by Ryan were taken.

For what Ryan has done is to stitch together pieces (omitting qualifications, nuances and explanations) taken from a book where I summarize the case for why Marx's theory of alienation is still very useful for understanding capitalism, despite all the changes that have occurred over the past 100 years (see *Alienation*, pp 251–2). For example, regarding my comments on vicarious living, Ryan took care to omit the following explanation: "To take pleasure through the pleasures of the unreal, paper doll figures cut out by publicity is an abject confession of inner emptiness." With enough use of scissors and paste, what cannot be proven?

In case it needs to be added, I think that the Gulags of this world, and cancer for that matter (neither of which dealt with in my book), have caused more actual suffering than vicarious living through the royal family. However, I am concerned here with alienation and capitalism. But then, I guess, so is Ryan. We just happen to be on different sides. Is it too much to hope that next time he show a little more care for scholarly standards in doing what his side requires of him?

BERTELL OLLMAN.
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'Tradition and Desire'

Sir, – Much of the confusion in Lorenz Eitner's deeply muddled review (April 12) of my *Tradition and Desire* is caused by the fact that, for Eitner, I seem to have invented the whole critical apparatus of my book *ex nihilo*. In reality, and as I make clear in my text, I transfer to discussion of painting certain critical ideas that are quite familiar in literary hermeneutics (such as Harold Bloom's well-known concept of influence, of which Eitner seems not to have heard).

Although such transferral of ideas is basic to the book's design, Eitner does not refer to it, and therefore misrepresents the book, as he misinforms your readers. I must assume that Eitner is too concerned with the purity of traditional art history, or is just too out of touch, to recognize methods familiar in literary criticism when he sees them. The question arises: are art historians professionally obliged to remain ignorant of the rest of the humanities?

NORMAN BRYSON.
King's College, Cambridge.

Shakespeare's Sonnets

Sir, – I am sorry that Peter Beal (Letters, May 10) has taken offence at my "rediscovery" of the manuscripts of Shakespeare's Sonnet 2 (April 19). If I had been allowed an extra column, I could myself have recounted the history of academic discussion of the manuscripts – as I have done in the "fuller version of this article, with documentation" which "will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*". That article acknowledges the work of both Beal and Hobbs. However, Hobbs's collations are neither accurate nor complete; she makes no attempt to defend the authenticity of the manuscript variants, or to construct an edited manuscript text. Instead, like Beal himself, she devotes much space to a speculative interpretation of the ambiguous words "a Song", appended to the title in one manuscript. The sonnet may have been set to music, but we cannot be sure, and even if we could be sure the fact would be of little significance, except as a conjectural explanation of the sonnet's popularity.

Its popularity might have simpler causes. Is it so surprising that miscellanies compiled by gentlemen bachelors should contain a poem on the need to marry in order to preserve the family line? The Rosenbach manuscript, for instance, was compiled by Horatio Carey – a direct descendant of the Hunsdon Careys, who were patrons of Shakespeare's company from 1594 to 1603; Horatio belonged neither to the Inns of Court nor to Oxford, but he did compile the miscellany shortly after the death of his father and grandfather, and shortly before the birth of his first son, who in time inherited the Hunsdon title.

I didn't say that "academic memoranda . . . don't count". Beal's *Index* has been invaluable to us, as no doubt to the editors of many other authors.

GARY TAYLOR.
Oxford Shakespeare, 40 Walton Crescent, Oxford.

The second sentence of the penultimate paragraph of Peter Beal's letter in last week's issue should have begun: "The only other sonnet of which particularly interesting manuscript texts survive is Sonnet 106 ('When in the chronicle of wasted time') . . .".

Shakespeare's 'Lost Years'

Sir, – Why is Anthony Powell (Letters, May 3) helping to perpetuate the weird academic fantasy about Shakespeare the Mummer Boy? To believe that, we first have to dismiss or distort the plain sense of what John Aubrey wrote: "when he killed a calf". Then we must suppose that Aubrey, even though he "always has his reasons", as Mr Powell himself insists, had no reasons for saying that Shakespeare's father was a butcher. Next, poor Aubrey must be further feigned to have misunderstood what his informants were telling him, allegedly about the "traditional mumming performance" of Killing the Calf. Alternatively, it was those informants themselves, namely some of the Shakespeares' neighbours in Stratford-upon-Avon, who got the story all wrong; unlike most English countrymen of any period, they could not tell killing from mumming. Either way, our next step is to bypass the evidence that (as Powell also explains) Shakespeare's father "had interests as a grazier (therefore butcher)". Then we must similarly discard the equally valid syllogisms that he was also a glover (therefore butcher), a dealer in wool (therefore butcher), a whittawer, ie, a dresser of hides and skins (therefore butcher), an *agricola* (therefore butcher) and a yeoman (therefore butcher). In this interest we may safely reject the testimony of a Stratford parish clerk that the young Shakespeare was apprenticed, in his own home town, to (of all people) a butcher. Never mind, either, the further local information that he was prematurely withdrawn from school to help with the family business. Now at last we are ready to interpret not only Aubrey's but also Hamlet's reference to killing a calf (III, ii, 104–5) as meaning anything but actually killing a calf. We are required, finally, to believe what Harold Jenkins tells us in the 1982 Arden *Hamlet*.

All this is needed solely in order to justify a hypothesis which is entirely unsupported by any vestige of evidence, or even elementary plausibility. Where, in the real world, are the rational grounds for supposing that Shakespeare ever in his life saw or heard of, let alone took part in, any such "traditional mumming performance" of Killing the Calf?

ERIC SAMS.
32 Arundel Avenue, Sanderstead, Surrey.

'The Cenci'

Sir, – I read *The Cenci* somewhat differently from A. S. Byatt, although her review (May 3) of the play's revival at Bristol New Vic is more than welcome. I had always thought that the reason Beatrice's father can do all he does do is because he is Power allied to Power – in the figure of the Pope. The play says as much in its three opening lines:

> That matter of the murder is hushed up
> If you consent to yield his Holiness
> Your fief that lies beyond the Plician gate.

When Beatrice and her mother, at the end of the play, face death it is clear, as Byatt indicates, that we witness a domain "with no mitigating hope for virtue". Beatrice says,

> If there should be
> No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world;
> The wide, gray, lampless, deep unpeopled world!

The image of the lamp often represented for Shelley benign presence – social presence even – and here it does so by virtue of its absence ("lampless"). Its absence, or its extinction, is achieved in this instance by her father and by the Pope. "Parricide grows so rife", the Pope is declared to have said, demonstrating both his determination to punish the crime of her father's murder and, at the same time, play his correlative part in tyranny.

Despite all this, what I don't share with Byatt is her sense that the place Shelley depicts is bleak *and* unredeemable – which is the view I believe she implies. "This is the winter of the world" – yes; but the ending of the play, as if Shelley were re-making tragedy, is surely intended to kindle in his audience, not only pity and terror, but outrage and thus anger for what inhumanity and injustice are done through tyranny. Not least among the products of this tyranny is Beatrice's responsibility for her father's murder – a crime which Shelley invites his audience to deplore. For in doing what she does, she is drawn into an orbit of activity identical with her father's – of which she and her mother are victims.

JON SILKIN.
19 Haldane Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Byron at Aberdeen

Sir, – Was it your reviewer's inadvertent error (in his notice of Michael Parnell's biography of Eric Linklater, April 26), or another of Eric Linklater's "early fictions", which had the statue of Byron gazing into the classrooms of Aberdeen Grammar School? Then, as now, the poet's back was firmly turned on the institution where he was so briefly educated.

CRAIG CLUNAS.
45 Mount Pleasant Crescent, London N4.

Indian English Poets

Sir, – Ye gods and little fishes, why has Bruce King (Letters, May 10) got himself so worked up over my review of three Indian poets? True, I am not a specialist in the "field" of contemporary Indian poetry, but I read these poems without preconceptions, and what I found there was an uneasiness with respect to language. I don't see that it is out of line to compare Latin, the *lingua franca* of pre-Reformation Europe – certainly the language in which university lectures would have been given in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – with English, the language of the "educated middle classes in most of the former British colonies" today. I am not surprised that Indians write in English; I am more surprised that nationalist feelings have not been aroused by the prevalence of English in no-longer English India. Having come to respect the pride the Welsh, for instance, take in their own language and its traditions, I assumed (naively enough, if you like) that Indians were likewise bi or tri-lingual, and that many Indian writers also write in their vernaculars.

I apologize for confusing the term "Anglo-Indian", which refers to a mixture of races, with "Indian English", the language of Indian poets. Again, a question of confused terminology. In England we speak of an Anglo-Welsh tradition of poetry to distinguish it from the Welsh-language tradition; and of an Anglo-Irish tradition to distinguish that from a Gaelic tradition (or sometimes even a Catholic tradition). No opprobrium attaches to any of this terminology. There is one respect in which I agree with Bruce King, and that is that Indian poetry is grossly neglected in this country. That is why I wanted to read these books – not as an academic specialist, but as a poet. I wrote my review in ordinary idiomatic English because I find American pseudo-objective academic lit-crit-speak as woolly and pretentious as I do windy emotionalism and pseudo-primitive protestations of universal violence.

ANNE STEVENSON.
Langley Park, Durham.

Modern Italy 1871–1982 by Martin Clark is published in paperback at £12, not £19.50 as was stated in the publication details preceding P. A. Ginsborg's review in last week's issue.

5 Poetry FIVE OF THE BEST

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Secker poets take off in June when Managing Director Peter Grose will personally pilot five of them across the country in a private plane. The poets will read at Plymouth, Bristol, Oxford, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow and London.

Secker & Warburg

COMMENTARY

The pioneer spirit

Mark Turpin

The American School of Architecture: The Bruce Goff Legacy
Heinz Gallery, until June 8

The American School of Architecture may sound a lavish title for an exhibition containing the work of just fourteen architects. It is, however, the first school whose inspirational roots lay primarily within the American continent. In fact, it is difficult to imagine the work of these architects without the backdrop of canyons, forests or prairies, for these are the students, assistants and protégés of Bruce Goff, the great architect of the American Mid West.

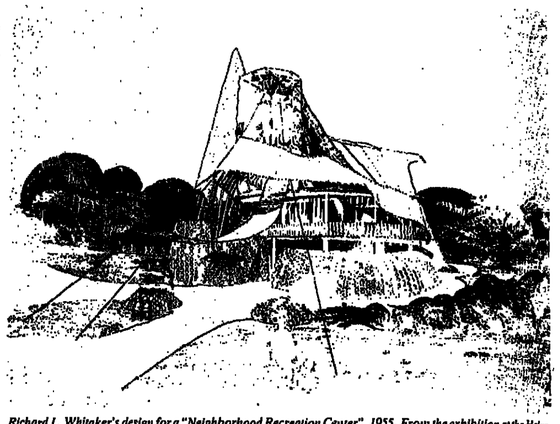
In a career spanning nearly seventy years up to his death in 1982, Goff combined influences as disparate as buffalo, cornfields, wigwams and aviation technology, in a remarkably creative architecture. As chairman of the School of Architecture at Norman, Oklahoma, from 1947 to 1956, he fostered a reaction to the training in the European traditions offered by the Ivy League Schools on the East Coast. By the early 1950s students from across the United States began migrating to Oklahoma, where, it was said, Mr Goff encouraged you to "do your own thing". He led his students away from the influence of historical prototypes and encouraged them to rely more on individual creativity and intuition; an introspective design process that assured, according to Goff, not only an original architecture, but one which was truly American.

The exhibition contains some fifty drawings, mostly pencil on tracing-paper. The draughtsmanship is superb. The content is fascinating, and sometimes more than a little fantastic. The inclusion of work by some of Goff's students is particularly rewarding. Untethered by practical constraints they portray highly imaginative images. Herb Greene's drawing made in 1951 for a High School Arts Building is a case in point. It is a large space formed under a lightweight crystalline structure, from which are suspended rooms in sparkling glass spheres. Richard Whitaker's drawing for an Institute for Mathematical Research, made in 1952, has a similar delicate grace. Elsewhere in the exhibition, there are two working drawings made by Greene in 1959 that exemplify the art of the architect at its best: a combination of bold artistic form and practical building information.

There are two predominant characteristics that recur in the work: soft, curving forms, rich with images of fish and animals, as in designs by Arthur Dyson or Valentino Agnoli; and a geometric feel, shown by the complex assemblages of Robert Overstreet. The best work – the Robert Hanna Residence project by Bart Prince, for example – balances these two characteristics. It is significant that the work of those who studied at Oklahoma after Goff's departure, while it has unmistakable similarities, never quite achieves this balance. It seems that when Goff left Oklahoma, the magic left too.

The American School has an impressive body of built work. Having admired Robert Overstreet's design drawing for the Overstreet-White House in California, one is pleasantly surprised to find photographs of the finished article, perfectly moulded into its site in the best traditions of organic architecture. It is a pity that there are not more photographs of the built work in the exhibition. Goff encouraged the use of luxurious materials and textures and as a rule, the buildings of the American School have an unusually comfortable, hand-made quality that cannot be conveyed effectively through drawings alone. The Price House in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, for example, which was designed by Goff in 1956, is not part of this exhibition. The design specifies a deep pile white carpet which extends, cloud-like, up the walls and across the ceiling to a skylight where the sunlight is filtered through goose-feathers.

Peculiar to America though the work may be, the arrival of the exhibition here is timely. Architectural schools on both sides of the Atlantic are cultivating styles which are increasingly classical and formal. Throughout his lifetime Goff strove to provide an alternative to such influences, with a more expressive architectural "software". Happily, it appears his legacy is intact.



Richard L. Whitaker's design for a "Neighborhood Recreation Center", 1955. From the exhibition at the Heinz Gallery reviewed here.

The reforming urge

Robert Hewison

The Ruskin Collection
The Ruskin Gallery, Sheffield

At a time when modern Ruskin scholarship has begun to prise Ruskin's political thought free of its encrustation of socialist myth, the socialist City of Sheffield has opened a new museum devoted to the man who described himself as "a violent Tory of the old school". It is a contradiction that Ruskin would have relished, and one that is reconciled in the visual argument of the display.

The new Ruskin Gallery restores to Sheffield the collection of drawings, prints, photographs, minerals, casts, books and illuminated manuscripts which Ruskin created as an example of the instructional museums that were to be at the heart of every settlement of his reforming society, the Guild of St George. He placed the collection in a cottage in the suburbs of Sheffield in 1875 because, he claimed, he was impressed by the city's craft tradition; but a practical reason was that a former pupil of his at the London Working Men's College, Henry Swan, had settled there, and was eager to act as curator. Both the Guild of St George and this arbitrary collection suffered in the years before Ruskin's death, as his mental breakdowns became more frequent.

In 1890, when the curator Swan was dead and Ruskin was no longer in control of his affairs, the museum of the Guild of St George was removed from its cramped quarters to a large house owned by Sheffield Corporation, where at the turn of the century it attracted as many as 60,000 visitors a year. By the 1950s, however, both Ruskin's reputation and the Guild of St George were at a low ebb, and in 1953 the bulk of the collection was put into store. In 1964 it was removed to Reading University, where it remained, virtually inaccessible, for another twenty years.

In 1975, however, the Guild decided to sell the collection's most precious possession, the "Madonna and Child" by Verrochio, which until then had been on loan to Sheffield City Art Gallery. The £350,000 raised by the controversial sale reanimated the Guild; Sheffield's pride in its Ruskin associations was stirred, and a campaign began to secure the return of the collection to the city. The council offered to rehouse the material, and this month it went back on public display in a converted Victorian building in the centre of Sheffield. A hundred years after the event, Ruskin's choice of location begins to make sense.

The new Ruskin Gallery, a former wine shop, is on the scale of a High Street bank. Tall windows onto Norfolk Street give height for display of some of the larger objects, such as the casts Ruskin had made from the sculpture of Venice; and his assistant T. W. Bunney's seven-foot long painting of St Mark's Three and other pieces have been carefully cleaned and restored. To one side some of the original furniture and book cases of the printed collection create a study area, and at the back a mezzanine supplies a two-bay upper gallery similar to a section of the print gallery at the British Museum. The overall effect is reassuringly intimate.

It is impossible to show all the collection at once, and the material on display has been chosen with a combination of Ruskinian eclecticism and contemporary selectivity. The upper gallery, for instance, traces Ruskin's obsession with the symbolism of St Ursula and St George through illuminated manuscripts, minerals, studies from Turner, copies of Carpaccio, and Ruskin's own drawings. Once the synthesizing drive of Ruskin's mind is appreciated, the effect is both coherent and pleasing.

Ruskin's commitment to the art of craft has been complemented by recent commissions to the blacksmith Giusseppe Lund for ironwork balustrades and window grilles, for the decorative lettering of a fifteen-foot high slab of Westmorland slate in the entrance hall by the cutter David Kindersley, and the illumination of quotations from Ruskin by the calligrapher Lida Lopes Cardozo. Lund's use of a power hammer to achieve his abstract shapes would not have met Ruskin's approval, and none of the decorative effects of these commissions is particularly happy, but it was enterprising of the gallery to make them, and a decision entirely Ruskinian in spirit.

Ruskin has returned to Sheffield, and his attacks on nineteenth-century liberal capitalism are displayed in the new context of a city that has been losing wealth in accordance with the same iron law of economics that once caused it to acquire it. The point is not that Ruskin would have seen eye to eye with Sheffield's present governors, but that both see culture as an expression of the health as well as the wealth of a society, and as a necessity of life. That was Ruskin's intended lesson to Sheffield, and the new Ruskin Gallery shows that it has been appreciated.

Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery have recently published *By Hammer and Hand*, an illustrated survey of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Birmingham, edited by Alan Crawford (169pp. Paperback, £6.95, plus £1.75 postage and packing. 0 7093 0119 7). The book contains five short surveys of the local manifestations of the Movement's desire to bring back tradional craftsmanship to an industrial society in the fields of architecture, decorative painting, book illustration, metalwork and stained glass. There are essays by Alan Crawford on the Arts and Crafts Movement and on its Birmingham setting in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and a gazetteer and a list of books illustrated by Birmingham artists.

Napoleonica and Nelsoniana

Sarah Bradford

Christie's, London were selling on May 8 the Calvin Bullock collection of Napoleonica and Nelsoniana in a sale which attracted considerable international attention and high prices.

A collection of fifteen volumes from Napoleon's library on St Helena, which included works on economics, Gothic novels and sentimental tales sold for £3,456 to an anonymous European collector, while a copy of a French translation of Defoe (Napoleon on St Helena is said to have identified with Robinson Crusoe) went to Berès for £1,944.

A collection of books from the library of the Empress Marie Louise, covering the years of her marriage to Napoleon in 1810 and her subsequent years as Duchess of Parma, was sold for £81,000 to Conigli, a Parma book-dealer, who also bought for £12,960 183 autograph letters by Marie Louise, dated 1799–1846, written to her friend Victoire de Poutet, Comtesse Crenneville, covering the years of her childhood, her marriage to Napoleon and her days as Duchess of Parma. Marie Louise's autograph diary of her journey to meet Napoleon at Mayence, July 23–August 9, 1813, which contains a charming account of four happy days they spent together, interrupted by boring dignitaries and bad meals, was sold for £15,210 to a European private collector. A poignant letter from Napoleon to Marie Louise, written from Fontainebleau on the eve of his departure for Elba, expressing his concern and love for her and for their son, sold for £9,720 to Otto Haas. A sad footnote to the whole affair, a letter to Marie Louise from their son, the King of Rome, Vienna, March 17, 1832, written a few months before his death, the last known extant in his own hand, was sold for £5,400 to a European collector.

Among the records of Napoleon's campaigns was a letter by Napoleon to the Duc de Bassano, written from Molodetchno, December 3, 1812, during the retreat from Moscow, stressing the desperate hunger of the Grande Armée; it was purchased for £2,916 by Otto Haas. An exultant signed letter by Blücher, dated June 24, 1815, reporting Napoleon's defeat and flight from Waterloo, made £7,560 to Fritz-Denneville, while an autograph proclamation to the Army of Italy from the year 1796 written by Napoleon from memory at St Helena, showed the exiled Emperor brooding on past glories. This was sold for £5,940 to a private collector.

A curious item of Napoleonica, five unpublished autograph letters written c1785–6 by the young Bonaparte to "Emma", an unidentified early love, sold for £8,100 to a private buyer. Among a large collection of Nelson letters were several addressed to Emma Hamilton – one, a jealous, passionate outpouring dated March 10, 1801, went so far as to suggest that Sir William Hamilton was encouraging the Prince of Wales to seduce Emma in order to get a pension from him (£7,020 to Spiro) and another, unpublished, dated May 18, 1805, made arrangements for their daughter, Horatia, in the event of his death (£9,180 to Spiro). Most poignant – and most expensive – of all was what appears to have been the last letter Emma wrote to Nelson, dated Canterbury, October 8, 1805. In it Emma writes touchingly of her love for Nelson and for their daughter and of her longing for his safe return. Nelson destroyed all Emma's letters to him and this is one of only two known to have survived, probably because they arrived after his death. It was acquired for £20,240 by J. J. May.

COMMENTARY

Rural reticence

Harold Hobson

JEAN-JACQUES BERNARD
Martine
Lyttelton Theatre

In Jean-Jacques Bernard's *Martine* there is a moment of illumination; and it is for that moment that the play was written. All the pathos of this magical but relentlessly cruel work proceeds from it. When Julien, the young Parisian, returns from his military service to his native village to visit his grandmother, and Martine, the uneducated country girl, meets him as he passes though a field of standing corn, and hears him speak, a revelation breaks upon her. For all her rusticity, her dumbness, her stupidity (she can hardly put one word after another) she becomes sister to Coriolanus in her blistering realization that there is a world elsewhere from the brutality of peasants and peasant life. Fifty years ago, Victoria Hopper, making her first appearance on the stage, stood in breathless silence and wonder as she heard Rubert Gregg's Julien speak with an ease, a charm and a fluency beyond all her imagination. It was as though a dark theatre suddenly blazed with light. But no light blazed at the Lyttelton on the opening night of Peter Hall's production of Bernard's masterpiece.

Practically everyone concerned with the production can claim credit for its failure. Andrew C. Wadsworth's Julien is a performance one would gladly stay away from. It is the foundation of the play that Martine's spirit is crippled because she is illiterate; she can find no words – till she meets Julien she does not know that such words exist – to express the intensity and delicacy of her feelings. The glory of words and the beauty of civilized speech are the convictions on which *Martine* rests. Now it would be absurd, in the context of a French play, to say that its hero should speak the *Queen's English*. But there should be something about him to explain why his speech so dazzles Martine, and unstops her ears. We want no reminders of dreaming spires or King's College Chapel, but some intimation that Parisian French is not, say, the French of Tocqueville-sur-Eu, or even of Marseille, is essential to the play. But where Hubert Gregg had poise and grace, Wadsworth is clumsy. His Julien walks badly, cannot stand still, does not know how to manage his walking-stick, wears crumpled clothes without distinction, and looks like one of Maupassant's second-rate seducers not up to the job.

When Julien leaves the village Wendy Morgan has an outburst of hysterical weeping which is genuinely moving, but so badly prepared for that on the first night it made the audience laugh. Otherwise Miss Morgan is unsatisfactory. She is surly and cantankerous, not simple and suffering. Unlike Victoria Hopper, she gives no hint of a radiance beyond her reach. Barrie Ruther's Alfred, on the other hand, is far too genial and likeable, far too sincere in his love for Martine. This makes her passionate revulsion from him seem perverse and repellent.

Peter Hall's production is slow; full of pauses that are anything but pregnant with meaning; overloaded with elaborate settings out of key with the play's simplicity; and fails to mark the social differences without which the piece becomes inexplicable. The translation by John Fowles is infelicitous. Its Anglicisms destroy belief. "Forget it" is current English slang. "You've done for me" recalls Eliza Doolittle. It seems unlikely that a French peasant would call himself "yours truly". Even the hallucination of being in France vanishes.

Yet the manifold defects of the production, performances and translation cannot rob the searing final scene of all its power. Julien, in recalling instances of affection, places arrows of cruelty in Martine's heart, and in a phrase about flowers (which he misunderstands) she shows that, for all her terrifying ignorance, she is immensely the superior being. The curtain rises on Alison Chitty's set in a scene of entrancing beauty, when the stage is filled with tall stalks of corn waving gently in the breeze. It is characteristic of the production that this rare beauty is quite alien to what Bernard is saying. For it suggests that the countryside is a thing of glory, while *Martine*'s argument, exactly following Maupassant and Balzac, is that the peasantry are brutalized and repressive, mere monsters of greed.

Man disposes

Patrick O'Connor

Sweeney Todd
Half Moon Theatre

"In the anxiety dreams of girls, being followed by a man with a knife or firearm plays a large part", wrote Freud. The folk hero with a knife – Mack the Knife, Bluebeard, Jack the Ripper – is no stranger to popular theatre. Christopher Bond's play, however, upon which Stephen Sondheim based his musical, makes of Sweeney a sort of Edmond Dantès, pursuing a vendetta against the corrupt judge who had him transported, so that the demon barber becomes avenging angel and the chorale that introduces the story, "Lift your razor high Sweeney", is chanted like the Dies Irae.

Harold Prince's 1979 production, overweighted by a massive cast iron and glass movable set, enjoyed a fashionable, though hardly popular, success in New York. The Drury Lane version a year of so later was short-lived. Bond's new staging uses a chamber version of the opera (the term is more appropriate than "musical", as the New York City Opera have acknowledged by taking it into their repertoire) with only five musicians and no extras (the soloists double as chorus for the inter-scene commentaries). This removes some of Sondheim's pastiche orchestral textures and throws back the musical emphasis on to the relentless staccato rhythms, classical beat music overlaid with sugary ballads – rather like Orff's *Carmina Burana*. But Bond's production is considerably more involving than the old one, though having the characters in close-up removes the feeling of the horrific events being played out within "a great black pit, / And the vermin of the world inhabit it: / And its morals aren't worth what a pig could spit, / And it goes by the name of London".

Because the music is essentially of the 1970s, and the attitudes modern, there is no real feeling of Victorian London and the sense of period is further confused by references to August Bank Holiday and bathing costumes – surely Edwardian inventions? The two-tier set, designed by Ellen Cairns, serves perfectly for barber's shop, city dwelling, mad-house and bakehouse. The cast are divided more or less equally into singers and actors, with the usual resulting discomfort in the blend of their voices. Todd is sung by Leon Greene, who is a softer barber than Len Cariou's 1979 demented redhead, and is therefore more understandably attractive to the widow Lovett. Gillian Hanna's performance runs the gamut of street theatre, from playing the spoons as she serves the pies, to splendidly effective mime.

One of the fiercest gimmicks of Prince's production was the blast of a high-pitched factory whistle which marked each throat-slashing. Here it is only the final, vengeful, murders that are given this highlight to emphasize further the twist that two of the victims are women. For the murders take the place in a plot of real romantic interest (the young lovers are just a diversion, their music soppy and more appropriate to some college romance); like the Ripper, for whom "the murder takes the place of the sexual act", Sweeney shows no interest in the romantic advances of his partner in butchery. The cruelty of the subject is matched by the audience's reaction. The brutal battering of a songbird, the throat cuttings, Mrs Lovett scooping out the marrow from a pan full of human bones, are all greeted with whoops of laughter. And it is a chilling thought that the theatre is within walking distance both of the scene of Jack the Ripper's crimes and the pubs frequented by the Kray twins.

Urban ire

Michael Davie

HOWARD BRENTON and DAVID HARE
Pravda: A Fleet Street comedy
Olivier Theatre

When it became known that two formidable marksmen-playwrights, Howard Brenton and David Hare, had Fleet Street in their sights, it looked as if at last Fleet Street was going to be brought down. Now art was going to hit a target barely touched by fusillades from politically motivated members of the National Union of Journalists, authoritarian politicians and discontented lecturers in media studies at provincial polytechnics.

Alas, *Pravda: A Fleet Street comedy* is a show that any journalist – even the editors of the *Sun* and *The Times*, whose papers, lightly disguised as *Tide* and *Victory*, are prominent in the play – could recommend to his aunts without a second's misgiving.

The comedy is certainly there, as advertised, especially in the first half, which contains many good jokes and one-liners. It is a funny idea that a newspaper proprietor should first sell his paper and only then inform his assembled staff that he is beginning a "process of consultation" to ascertain their wishes. "Not everyone is fired", he says. "It's not as simple as that." The play is brilliantly staged, with newsrooms looking like newsrooms, and journalists, for once, looking and even sounding like journalists. The dominant character, Le Roux, a South African outsider-tycoon who buys first a tabloid and then the organ of the Establishment, is given a most powerful and ingenious performance by Anthony Hopkins, with animal instincts and sinister balletic gestures. Politician, gangster boss, police chief, company chairman – Le Roux behaves like all of these, so that through him the authors do occasionally approach their stated purpose, which is to illuminate the workings of power in general and of Fleet Street in particular.

But these suggestions of a universal theme are achieved by the skill of an actor, not by the text or plot. The action, a succession of short scenes, resembles a series of clever revue sketches put on in a university. The authors perhaps did too much research; they are too up-to-the-minute. As at a university revue, the audience is distracted by allusion-spotting. The *Tide* must be the *Sun*; *Victory* must be *The Times*. The pompous deposed "Fruit-Norton" must be Sir William Rees-Mogg and the northern editor come south must be Mr Harold Evans and "Cliveden Whicker-Basket" must be Mr Charles Douglas-Home, the present editor of *The Times*. (Apart from the way his trousers hang round his ankles, Le Roux alone bears no resemblance to any living Fleet Street figure, such as Mr Rupert Murdoch.)

The high-jinks on stage, and the fun that all concerned must have had in putting on the show, obstruct any substantial intellectual examination of the nature of the press, as at present owned and conducted. The play scores a few flesh-wounds about the way sub-editing can transform a story, about the reluctance of papers to correct mistakes, about the lobby system, and about the way journalists can avoid thinking about substance by becoming obsessed with lay-out. But the jabs and jokes are not armour-piercing.

The point being made about power is not so much that a powerful man forces others to do his will as that others prostrate themselves before him: "Why should I lift a gun? People disgrace themselves around me. Sell their property, emigrate, betray their friends, even before I ask them. Give in." The climactic scene puts an editor on his knees before Le Roux. Earlier, he has been too weak to publish a leaked document that proves the Minister of Defence is a liar. He becomes editor of another paper and exposes the misdeeds of Le Roux. But this information is false and has been planted by Le Roux himself, who issues a libel writ. The editor, outwitted and defeated is destroyed.

All this is highly implausible. Why did not the editor, instead of falling to his knees, return to his office and write the story of the way the misinformation had been planted by Le Roux's right-hand man? The editor had four witnesses. Even under British libel laws, no jury would have found for Le Roux.

The play's central charge against newspapers appears to be that they pretend, like *Pravda*, to be about truth, but in practice have no connection with truth. "Nothing can be said through these things", exclaims the editor's idealistic wife, as she scrumples up newspapers in fury and despair. It was she who got hold of the leaked document that her husband failed to publish. Like many attacks on Fleet Street, this speech is based on the proposition that somehow, despite appearances to the contrary, vital political information in Britain is consistently suppressed by a conspiracy that includes newspapers. Yet even in the play the bullet misses the target by a mile, since the editor's wife takes the document to another paper, which publishes it.

It should be noted that the text of the play published by Methuen (124pp. £3.50. 0 413 58480 1) differs markedly from the stage version.

Woman proposes

Michael Bertin

FRANK WEDEKIND
The Lulu Plays
Palace Theatre, Watford

To Brecht, Frank Wedekind was "one of the great educators of modern Europe". Creating his major works between 1890 and 1910, Wedekind challenged the school of European Naturalism and prefigured Expressionism, vied with Strindberg in the depiction of dangerous women, introduced an element of the circus into theatre, and opened the stage to the underside of society, all the while fighting the good fight against sexual hypocrisy and repression. For whatever reason – chance, his aggressive style and sexually explicit subject matter, his Central European coloration – Wedekind's reputation is not high in England, and his drama, with a few notable exceptions, is rarely staged in London. The little we know of him comes by way of a dim reflection of what Brecht took over from his human menagerie. If for nothing else, then, the Palace Theatre in Watford deserves thanks for presenting Wedekind's *Lulu* plays: *Earth Spirit* (1893) and *Pandora's Box* (1894). The plays, known primarily through Berg's opera and through G. W. Pabst's silent film of 1928, have been newly adapted and directed by Leon Rubin from a translation by Peter Tegel.

The question posed by *Lulu* is, quite simply, the nature of Lulu. To what degree is she responsible for her downward career from middle-class respectability to poverty and prostitution? To Wedekind, she was "madonna-like", but most of her critics, from the turn of the century onwards, have seen her as a perverse adventuress, less innocent than corrupting. Wedekind parades her entourage as a carnival of pimps, prostitutes and perverts, but there is a tragedy implied in his comic circus. Lulu is a mystery, an amoral beast pitched beyond moral considerations. Our sense of her moral nature is less a matter of who she is, and more a reflection of her world and its impositions. She is what the other characters and what we – the audience – make of her.

In this production Lucy Gutteridge as Lulu conveys the character's ambiguity well. A beautiful woman, she renders real the attentions Lulu receives, demonstrating an appetite for life both innocent and provocative. Most importantly, she can portray someone who, while witholding herself, is available for everyone's fantasies. Few of the other performances so elegantly attain Wedekind's stature, though there are accomplished performances by Heather Canning, John Woodvine, Gwenda Hughes, David Rappaport and Wolfe Morris. The production is good; Mark Pritchard's lighting is especially insinuating – with its distortions and shadows – of the expressionistic nightmare world.

A continent in conflict

Jonathan Israel

GEOFFREY PARKER and others
The Thirty Years' War
340pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £20.
0 17009883

The Thirty Years War is a topic which fascinates and demands explanation. But as successive generations of scholars have piled up layer upon layer of detailed work concerning particular periods, aspects or localities of the conflict, the task of synthesis has become ever more difficult. To come anywhere near success, the would-be synthesizer not only needs a prodigious linguistic and research apparatus, and a prodigious capacity to digest the growing heaps of published primary and secondary sources, but must also, in some manner, fill in the numerous gaps which still exist, and as if all this were not enough, be familiar with the historical background of all the many non-German powers which intervened. This means coming to grips not just with the policies of Spain, France, Sweden, Denmark, Transylvania and the Dutch, the main foreign participants, but also with those of England, Poland, Turkey, Savoy, Venice, the Papacy and Russia, which also had some impact on the final outcome.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the number of general surveys of what was known in Germany down to 1914 as the "Great War" are really rather few. Furthermore, even the best and most widely known of them have all been seriously deficient in one respect or another. The much consulted book by C. V. Wedgwood (1938) distorts in a variety of ways, presenting the conflict as basically a German affair, overemphasizing the role of religion, and having remarkably little to say about the roles of such major participants as Spain and the Dutch. Another well-known synthesis, by G. Pagès (1939), is so preoccupied with the centrality of France as to be almost perfunctory in other respects. J. V. Polišenský (1971) is even more given to distortion, absurdly over-emphasizing the role of Bohemia and forcing the whole into a totally unconvincing Marxist framework. The extended essay by S. H. Steinberg (1966) is useful up to a point, especially as an antidote to Wedgwood and Pagès, having much to say on the roles of the European powers; but, even more than the others, it is weak in its account of the politics and general condition of Germany.

Set against this background, Geoffrey Parker's latest book, written with his usual verve and vigour, stands out as a notable historiographical event. He has succeeded in producing a lucid, relatively short account which, for balanced coverage, perspective and command of all aspects of the conflict is, undoubtedly, a considerable advance on anything else published this century. It will at once move to first place on the list of standard works in English and deserves to be translated at an early date into German and an assortment of other languages.

The format of the book is in itself something of a historiographical innovation. It is in no sense a collection of essays or of contributions edited by Geoffrey Parker. What he has done, to tighten his grip on divergent aspects of the story, is to invite some contributions, from (mostly) leading experts in their fields, while writing the main body of the text himself. There are in fact nine auxiliaries – Simon Adams, Gerhard Benecke, Richard Bonney, J. H. Elliott, R. J. W. Evans, C. R. Friedrichs, Bodo Nischan, the Danish historian E. I. Petersen, and Michael Roberts – who together have produced eighty-eight out of a total of 226 pages of text, or 39 per cent of the whole. It was hardly to be expected that the quality of all nine subsidiary contributions would be uniformly high but, on the whole, these sections integrate very well with Parker's own text, and the experiment pays off to the extent that it does enrich the final result, especially in the case of the sections dealing with Spain, France, Sweden, Denmark and the ideological background of the emperor Ferdinand II.

Having advanced thus far towards achieving a uniquely balanced, multi-dimensional approach, it is a pity that there are still one or two unfortunate lapses. In particular, the Dutch Republic receives deplorably perfunctory treatment. Here Simon Adams (whose twenty-two pages constitute the longest but certainly not the strongest of the lesser contributions) is the chief, though by no means the only, offender. Adams seems to think that "England served as the focus for Palatine – and, indeed, for all Protestant diplomacy" and largely ignores the Dutch. In fact, Maurice of Nassau, anxious to deflect Habsburg energies from nearer home, was at all stages more active than James I in encouraging Frederick of the Palatinate to accept the Bohemian crown and defend his territories against the Emperor and Spain; it was the Dutch Republic, not England, which was the pivot of Protestant diplomacy down to 1625. And after 1625, while it is correct to say that Frederick Henry showed much less interest in manipulating the German situation than had Maurice, there is still a constant interaction between the conflicts in the Low Countries and in Germany which had far more influence on the overall situation than one would gather from this book. But this inadequate coverage of the Dutch role (and that of Brussels) is very much an exception.

Perhaps the greatest strength of Parker's account is that he is constantly at pains to reveal the intricacies of the German political scene, bringing out the twists and turns in the policies not only of such major states as Brandenburg and Saxony but of many lesser states as well, and to relate these intricacies to the wider framework of great power rivalry. While fully alive to the habitually brutal religious passions and propaganda of the time, it shows, perhaps more fully and convincingly that any other work has done, just how far this conflict was from being a German civil war over religion. The hostility between Lutherans and Calvinists was frequently more intense than that between Lutherans and Catholics. Gustavus Adolphus may have been regarded by some as the champion of the Protestant cause; but the lack of initial support for Swedish intervention inside Germany, as distinct from France and the United Provinces, was almost total. When Brandenburg and Saxony did align with Sweden, in the years 1631–34, these Protestant states had to be practically forced to do so. For six years (1635–41) in the case of Brandenburg, and longer in that of Saxony, the states then switched sides, fighting alongside the Emperor, their territory being devastated by the Swedish soldiery. A similar lack of ideological content characterized the attitude of most other German secular principalities.

And not only German ones. The emperors Ferdinand II and Ferdinand III may have followed a rigidly Catholic policy but this was thoroughly untypical. Catholic concerns played little or no part in either Spanish or French war aims. After a brief but disastrous intervention in the years 1625–29, Denmark followed an openly pro-Habsburg policy down to the end of the war in 1648, forging links with Austria and especially with Spain. And, as for the Dutch, only someone totally ignorant of their politics, as an English observer pointed out, could imagine that sympathy for the Protestant cause played any part in their policy-making. Churchmen thundered from the pulpit and politicians felt obliged to pay lip-service to religious concerns; but none of this had much bearing on the making of policy.

What now remains to be done if we are to piece together a viable general account of the Thirty Years War is to provide coverage of the economic and social impact of the struggle comparable in quality with that given here to the political, military and diplomatic aspects. By concentrating on the latter, and devoting only one short section to economic and social questions, Parker will perhaps leave his readers with the sense that something is missing. It is regrettable that nothing at all is said about the commerce of Hamburg and Frankfurt, the one burgeoning and the other collapsing, a contrast very typical of the widely disparate impact the war had on the economic life of Central Europe. While sack and devastation severely disrupted trade, industry and agriculture in some or many parts of Germany, there was a vigorous upsurge along the North German coast, as foodstuffs and supplies of all kinds poured in from the Dutch provinces, Sweden and Poland, and were then shipped up the Elbe, Weser, Oder, Ems and other rivers to the fixed garrisons and armies in the field. The extremely important fact that for the duration of the Thirty Years War North Germany became the pivot of the carrying trade between the Baltic and the Iberian Peninsula is briefly mentioned but its significance is not brought out. It is a pity also that we are told so little about the Austro-Spanish Baltic *armada* established at Wismar in the late 1620s, a project which exerted a dramatic influence not only over north-east Germany but the entire Baltic region for several years until Swedish forces captured this accumulation of ships and stores in 1630.

But no one will ever write a general history of the Thirty Years War which is beyond criticism. In most respects this is a judicious, lively, enlightening and, above all, highly serviceable work for which scholars, students and the general public alike will be grateful.

Matthäus Merian d. Ä's engraving of the Battle of Chur, April 14, 1622, taken from H. G. Dahms's Deutsche Geschichte im Bild.

Nationalized industry

W. A. Speck

ALAN J. GUY
Oeconomy and Discipline: Officership and administration in the British army, 1714–63
188pp. Manchester University Press. £25.
0 7190 1099 3

Alan J. Guy's thesis is that between 1714 and 1766 a series of changes took place in the relationship between central government and captains of regiments which taken together transformed the regimental economy. As a result of the reforms, uses made by captains of public money which they had previously regarded as legitimate private perquisites were brought under administrative scrutiny. For example, the use of fictitious names in muster rolls was suppressed; stoppages from soldiers' pay were regulated, and regimental accounts were more strictly supervised. Tempting though it must have been to place these developments in the currently fashionable context of the growth of professionalization in the eighteenth century, Dr Guy resisted the temptation. So far from transforming a military career from a trade into a profession, the restriction of opportunities to profit from handling regimental funds made it more than ever essential for army officers to possess private incomes. The reforms did, however, facilitate the evolution of the army from a semi-private, albeit state-supported, enterprise into a nationalized undertaking. As Guy concludes, "as far as the concept of mercenary soldiering was concerned, the final dismantling of the traditional regimental economy post-1780 resembled the destruction of a temple from which the god had long since fled".

The documentation on which this thesis rests is formidable. Manuscript sources from nine archives are listed in three closely printed pages. Guy has particularly benefited from his familiarity with the holdings of the National Army Museum, of which he is Research and Information Officer. He also makes excellent use of published sources, including a copy of J. Railton's *The Army Regulator or the British Monitor* in the Bodleian with critical marginal notes by a contemporary. As a doctoral dissertation, which is how it began, this work is impeccable; but as a book it still leaves something to be desired. Guy has not sufficiently taken to heart the excellent advice given him by a leading military historian, whom he acknowledges in the preface, "to purge the text of 'thesis-speak'"; although there are passages where it comes alive and reads well, much of it still remains in D Phil.ese.

It must be admitted that the principal problem is inherent in his chosen topic, for, as Tawney once observed, financial history has a dullness all its own. Only a literary alchemist could transmute leaden episodes like "the machinery of regimental finance and its reform" into the gold of compulsively readable prose. When Guy turns from the minutiae of administrative procedures to "personal pay and private perquisites" the reader is at once transported from the stuffy labyrinths of Whitehall to barracks and battlefields in three continents.

At the same time he does seem to make difficulties for himself. Why, for instance, use the outmoded spelling of economy in the title? It is taken from *A short course of standing rules for the government and conduct of an army*, published in 1744. "All that constitutes a good army", asserted its author, "may be comprehended under two general heads, its oeconomy and discipline." It is superficially a striking phrase, but Dr Guy has to labour it to make it sum up his theme. "The word 'oeconomy' embraced the twin notions of clear-cut administration and frugality", he explains, "linked by the word 'discipline' to the modern military virtues of uniformity and subordination".

When a title requires such laborious and even dubious definition – for the subject of discipline properly understood is nowhere part of the discussion – then it would have been better to drop it. The subtitle is also slightly misleading, as the argument extends beyond 1763.

However, readers who trip over this threshold should pick themselves up and step inside. For though the story of the government's attempts to bring regimental agents and captains to book inevitably tends to be tedious, their endless ingenuity in evading accountability, described in many absorbing anecdotes, is anything but dull. For example, in 1762 the Board of Ordnance discovered that where it had allowed Colonel John Campbell's regiment of foot credit of £1 15 7d for each pair of pistols, the officers had been buying "a very bad sort" in Birmingham for only eighteen shillings a pair. The tension between public control and private enterprise in the army is a perennial interest, as the popularity of the television series *Sergeant Bilko* amply demonstrates.

In the mood

K. G. Robbins

JAMES JOLL
The Origins of the First World War
228pp. Longman. £5.95.
0 582 49016 2

James Joll's welcome new book inaugurates a series of volumes dealing with the causes of wars. It is argued by Harry Hearder, the series editor, that much of the diplomatic history concerned with the origins of modern wars is dated, both in tone and approach. Historians in the past have been too narrowly concerned with the flow of dispatches between foreign ministries and embassies, to the neglect of profound social, political and economic forces. They have too readily assumed that their extensive knowledge of the past can have no relevance for the present or future. The point is sound, though hardly novel, since it is Professor Joll himself who has taught a generation of historians to look for the "unspoken assumptions" behind the language of statesmen and diplomats. Given the intention of the series, therefore, it is fitting that he should summarize his own assessment of the relationship between "profound forces" and short-term political considerations in the summer of 1914.

The introduction sketches the historiographical background, from Lowes Dickinson and *The International Anarchy*, through Renouvin, Schmitt, Fay and Albertini, to Fischer's *Griff nach der Weltmacht*. Diplomatic historians have waded through the massive documentary collections seeking at least to apportion responsibility, if not blame, but there is still no unanimity. In such a light, what can one say in one chapter on the July crisis? Joll provides a succinct initial narrative of events from the perspective of those who at least thought they were making decisions. We move from capital to capital, assessing as we go the degree of information then available to participants and the basis of their calculations. Rumour and suspicion mingled with the optimistic belief that all problems had solutions. In retrospect, it can be seen how one event led to another; but that pattern was not so clear at the time. We are left with Bethmann-Hollweg sensing a doom greater than human power hanging over Europe. Sir Edward Grey coined his one memorable phrase. Were men boxed in by forces beyond their control?

In April 1914, a leading article in *The Times* referred with satisfaction to the division of the Great Powers in Europe into two well-balanced groups, maintaining intimate internal relations. Such close ties did not preclude any member being on the friendliest terms with one or more members of the other group. This arrangement ensured that all sovereigns and statesmen, indeed all nations, were restrained because they knew that a "war of group against group" would be a "measureless calamity". Having had the alliance structure and the "old diplomacy" that serviced it explained to us, we are left to conclude that the confidence of *The Times* was misplaced. The balance was unstable, not least because each side had a weak link and also felt obliged to compete for the allegiance of small peripheral states. The diplomats might have felt that they had the "system" under control, but was not their supremacy being usurped by the military planners? That takes us into the broad area of "militarism, armaments and strategy" in the decades before 1914. The central role of armies in the life of most European states is stressed by Joll; the deeper phenomenon of "militarism" is skilfully probed. Plans for war abounded. It was the task of military men to prepare them, but did they want to use them? No simple answer emerges, though we note that almost all decision-makers fell victim to the "short-war illusion".

Joll is even-handed, too, in his treatment of the relationship between internal and external policies in the main belligerent countries. In the short term, politicians in power often hoped that war might strengthen their own positions and relegate or remove vexatious domestic disputes. Yet it is not possible to devise a model which applies throughout Europe. Each country was different in this respect, and, even in the case of Germany, Joll is unwilling to analyse foreign policy solely in terms of the *Primat der Innenpolitik*. In any event, the atmosphere of the time made cool and rational calculation of profit and loss impossible. And that is also true in a strictly financial sense. Of course, there was competition in the commercial sphere, but Joll finds little evidence that the particular war of 1914 was triggered off by immediate economic pressures. A chapter on imperial rivalries leads to the conclusion that the immediate motives which led governments to fight were not directly imperialist, though earlier imperialist policies had contributed to the "frame of mind" in which decisions were taken. So, perhaps we must seek a clue not in supposed "objective" considerations, but in that strange amalgam of emotions which we call "the mood of 1914". As one would expect, the author is at his best in presenting an analysis of this mood. He can find room for Ulster and Mme Caillaux, for Boy Scouts and Marinetti. By 1914, he concludes, the idea, if not the reality of war was a familiar one to Europeans – though there was also an assumption that it would always be avoided.

The author's own conclusion is measured, but perhaps a little timid. Each of the factors he has considered contributed "something" to the decisions in the final crisis, but he eschews any rank order. The *Zeitgeist* does not in itself explain the particular combination of circumstances which produced the July crisis, but he equally scorns an English obsession with the short-term calculations of politicians. A little sadly, he wonders whether historians have to resign themselves to what he calls a kind of "two-tier history". There is a world of broad trends and developments and there is a world of individuals who make decisions. Such a position is sketched and not developed, but in pursuing it we may get nearer an adequate explanation of the origins of the First World War.

Many crises in one

Stanley G. Payne

PAUL PRESTON (Editor)
Revolution and War in Spain 1931–1939
299pp. Methuen. Paperback, £6.95.
0416349706

E. H. CARR
The Comintern and the Spanish Civil War
Edited by Tamara Deutscher
111pp. Macmillan. £17.50 (paperback, £6.95).
0333369521

As we near the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, we may anticipate a new outpouring of articles, books, lectures and conferences in commemoration. Though the generation that lived through that conflict is rapidly passing from the scene, and younger scholars and historians are no longer attracted to the topic as much as during the past decade or two, it cannot be said that interest has altogether waned.

Since the death of Franco in 1975, the centre of scholarly work on the Republic and the Civil War has passed logically to Spain, where nearly all the sources and survivors are to be found. Contemporary history, long discouraged, has there held a very large share of the attention both of younger historians and of the reading public. Hispanists in the English-speaking world, by contrast, have been much more active in early periods of Spanish history, their main contributions recently having been to the study of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The new volume of twelve short studies on the Republic and the Civil War, edited by Paul Preston, is thus particularly welcome. It brings together work by four Spanish and eight British or British-educated historians to treat a wide variety of major themes: A portion of the material is not absolutely new, having earlier appeared in other forms in Spanish, but most of the book constitutes a significant contribution to the English-language literature.

Taken as a whole, the book presents two fundamental theses. To quote Preston, "it is the central theme of this book that the Spanish Civil War was not one but many wars", that is, a conflict with distinct social and political configurations (and even involving different issues) in various regions of the country, whose principal actors, although allied on the same sides, were pursuing highly divergent goals. A second major thesis, at least of some of the papers, is that the historiography of the Civil War has treated it too exclusively in political and ideological terms, to the exclusion of the economic impact of the comparatively rapid modernization of Spanish society that took place between 1915 and 1930 and of the critical effects of the Depression itself.

A good case is made on behalf of both these theses. Specialized scholars are well aware of the first aspect, yet it continues to be overlooked or inadequately emphasized. Concerning the second, a body of evidence is now building up which indicates that most of the preceding literature has indeed granted too much autonomy to the causal influence of politics and ideology. In the future, the political process of the Republic will have to be treated with greater awareness of the radicalizing impact of the socio-economic crisis. Spain had no high unemployment rate, for example, to equal Germany's, yet it had achieved a level of structural complexity that resulted in concurrent industrial and agrarian peasant crises, made more acute by recent growth and new interrelated dependencies.

The two chapters dealing with Catalan politics and with the Basque question, by Norman Jones and Juan Pablo Fusi respectively, have somewhat less to do with socio-economic issues but are extremely cogent treatments of two of the most complex political problems facing the Republic. If that of Catalonia has been resolved in considerable measure under the new democratic system, much less progress has been made on the Basque issue. President Alcala Zamora's trenchant remark in 1933 that "The greatest difficulty of the Catalan problem lies in the fact that the region that demands the greatest autonomy is the one least fitted to exercise it" might well be repeated in 1985 with regard to the Basque country.

The broader debate over macropolitical issues is dealt with most directly by Preston in his historiographical introduction and in the first two chapters, by Shlomo Ben-Ami and Frances Lannon. Preston tends to see a broader understanding of social and economic conditions as serving to vindicate the left, whatever their considerable misdeeds, while Ben-Ami emphasizes the positive factors of civic and economic development that already existed in 1931, which, in other circumstances, might have been thought to offer strong encouragement to the development of a modern, democratic system. He is correct to point this out, his intention being to refute other writers, whom he sees as having declared the whole enterprise to be doomed from the start rather than the victim of the specific political process that developed after 1931. Here, however, Ben-Ami probably misreads the previous literature, which generally locates the flaw precisely in the development of that process rather than in any a priori determinism. Spain had already shown its capacity for one dimension of civic modernization in the relatively successful parliamentary monarchy of 1875–1931, yet, to employ a metaphor, athletic ability is of little use if most members of the team seem determined subsequently to play poorly, constantly foul each other and refuse to co-operate.

Lannon's chapter revives the old debate about the respective responsibility of Catholics and anticlericals in producing absolute political polarization, an outcome for which she roundly finds the former more culpable. On this point, however, Ben-Ami does not seem entirely to agree. Curiously, none of the writers in this volume bothers to contrast the consensual democratic style of King Juan Carlos, Adolfo Suarez and their associates in other parties, which has produced the stable democracy of the present time, with the sectarian, confrontational and revolutionary/counter-revolutionary political process of the Republic. This would not of course settle the endless Spanish "war guilt" debate, but it would be illuminating.

The final section of the book deals with aspects of the Civil War itself. Denis Smyth presents a trenchant re-examination of Hitler's policy that is the best brief study on that topic in any language, and Michael Alpert a cogent examination of the military under the Republic in both peacetime and war. Angel Viñas concludes the volume with a clear and accurate summary of the financing of the war.

If the collective volume edited by Preston is successful, the same cannot be said of the post-humous book by E. H. Carr. What has been published apparently represents the first sketch for a longer book whose writing was interrupted by the author's death; and is a good example of how a major reputation can generate the publication of a manuscript that would be rejected out of hand if it had come from a lesser figure. The product is an eighty-five-page text, completed with the assistance of Tamara Deutscher, that briefly summarizes some of the main points of Republican politics during the Civil War and what little can be readily learned from published materials concerning the Comintern's relationship thereto. Since the study relies primarily on secondary sources, especially on the Soviet scholar M. Meshcheryakov's *Ispanskaya Respublika i Komintern*, very little new information is provided, while Carr's knowledge of Republican politics was too limited to permit him to advance any noteworthy new interpretations. Despite the reliance on secondary sources, clearly all the pertinent literature by scholars and memoirists in Spanish is ignored, as, astoundingly, is Burnett Bolloten's *The Spanish Revolution*, which commentators of diverse viewpoints generally agree is the primary study of Republican politics during the first ten months of the conflict.

The perspective offered is the standard one propounded by the leftist intelligentsia, with the leftists representing "democracy" and the rightists normally labelled "the Fascists". Any advance by the latter automatically unleashes a "rain of terror" in occupied country, whereas the Spanish left in its turn seems generally innocent of any such thing.

The whole function of the Comintern focus may be questioned, for in fact not much of the text deals with the Comintern and there is no general attempt to come to grips with Soviet foreign policy aside from an occasional generalization. Even the International Brigades, a prime Comintern enterprise, draw little space. At the end, Carr reaches the predictable conclusion that Stalin was primarily concerned to safeguard the vital interests of the Soviet Union.

There is no question, however, that the general theme of the rise of Spanish Communism and the place of the Spanish revolution and civil war in broader Soviet and Comintern policy is deserving of more study. For Carr, its importance lies in its having provided the fullest opportunity to develop a popular front, and, finally, towards the end of the fighting, a new united front of all the Republican sectors. He concludes correctly that "it was a system which found wider application in eastern Europe after the liquidation of Comintern and the end of the Second World War".

Though some will doubtless endeavour to maintain the old line of "fascism versus democracy", the wartime Spanish Republic has continued to hold attention not because of any genuine association with democracy but because it was doubtless the most attractive of all the major revolutionary struggles of this century. It was certainly the most pluralistic, never fully succumbing to Communist domination and finally shaking it off altogether; and in anarchist collectivism it presented the rare example of a clear non-Marxist revolutionary model. It has also remained a lost cause that cannot ever be fully discredited, for it soon went down to defeat, forever preserving it from the kind of discredit that successful revolutionary enterprises in the Soviet Union, China and elsewhere have sooner or later brought on themselves. This alone is enough to assure it a continued place in the hearts and minds of the political intelligentsia.

Return to *Realpolitik*

David Carlton

ROBERT KEE
1945: The world we fought for
371pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.95.
0241 115310

Reading this book about 1945 amid a variety of ceremonies, media events and bitter controversy about President Reagan's itinerary in Germany, I am compelled to ask what it is that we are supposed to be commemorating and celebrating. And in a roundabout way Robert Kee has helped to answer my question – though it is not an answer he himself would give or one that would be likely to appeal to the majority of prospective readers.

The starting-point of my own analysis is to go back not forty but sixty years. For it was in 1925 that the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, proclaimed that the Polish Corridor was something "for which no British Government ever will or ever can risk the bones of a British Grenadier". Yet it was to preserve Polish control of precisely this Corridor, together with Danzig, that his half-brother's Cabinet went to war with Germany in 1939. Reluctantly yielding to the pressures coming from the opposition parties as well as from critics on his own side such as Anthony Eden and Winston Churchill, Neville Chamberlain suspended a British tradition of "betraying" Poles that went back to Lord Palmerston, Lord Castlereagh and even the Younger Pitt.

Could it be, then, that the importance of 1945 for us is that it marked the end of this high-minded aberration in British foreign policy? It was, after all, only at the Yalta Conference that the romantic Churchill was finally driven to recognize that further fighting for Polish interests was beyond his country's strength. Thus when Stalin, despite agreeing to sign the morally uplifting Yalta Declaration, made it unmistakably clear that he intended to fix Poland's frontiers without consultation and subsequently to deny her citizens free elections, Churchill knew he would have to accept the harsh reality.

It is, of course, possible to regret, as Churchill at the time did – and as I am inclined to do with hindsight – that the Americans (then in sight of an atomic monopoly that lasted until 1949) were not more resolute in assisting the Poles. But what surely cannot be rationally regretted is that, in the absence of such American resolve, British leaders should at last have recognized their limitations. It is an approach to which they have adhered ever since. And it is one the Americans also now completely accept – happily so in conditions of strategic nuclear parity.

Forty years on, then, the Soviets are at liberty to impose any cruelty they may see fit on the hapless Poles and we would assuredly walk by on the other side. In such circumstances Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan, for all the rhetoric about "evil empires", would be the personification of timidity in any comparison with the Chamberlain Cabinet of 1939. That this is so should fill all of us in the West with a great sense of relief. Nevertheless, there may be something slightly unseemly about actually celebrating the acceptance of so unpleasant a necessity. Yet that in reality is what so many have recently been doing by commemorating the restoration of a European peace based on such grave injustice. Perhaps if the authorities had decided to mark only the death of Adolf Hitler, and not the end of warfare in Europe, the difficulty might in theory have been avoided. But such a distinction would in practice have been impossible to maintain. For the fact is that most of us, however much we may try to deceive ourselves, are actually relieved that British policy towards Eastern Europe has for the past forty years been based on that popular approach which the Chamberlain Cabinet adopted at the time of Munich.

I recognize that none of this will be welcome reading to most people. But let me at once assure them if that is the case that Robert Kee's book in precisely the antidote they need. His *1945* in fact is a study of 1945 that could have been written in 1946. He reveals no interest in, or even awareness of, the views, jaundiced or otherwise, of any historians of a later generation; nor has he troubled to consult the archival records of what went on in 1945 behind closed doors in any of the relevant *capitals. Instead, he is content* to rely overwhelmingly for his sources on the contents of the British newspapers for 1945 – supplemented occasionally by their American and French counterparts.

The picture that emerges will give comfort to all who believe that, seen from London, the *Second World War was not only a noble crusade* but also had a more or less happy ending. Nazi Germany naturally emerges as a uniquely evil adversary with which no parley could ever have been imagined. By contrast, the Soviet Union, though assuredly not without flaws and not to be fully relied upon to establish Western-style democracy in Eastern Europe, is essentially a worthy ally in the fight against Fascism. Hitler's concentration camps are revealed in all their stark horror, while Stalin's Gulag goes unremarked. (Granted his method of relying solely on contemporary sources, Kee is not of course to blame for these distortions.)

As for the British, they are depicted as a nation which, having endured great sacrifices, is now bracing itself for a difficult phase of reconstruction under the newly elected Labour Government. That Great Britain, largely as a result of its recent quixotic exertions, was destined forty years on to become something of a slum-state in the West European firmament is not foreseen and hence not mentioned by Kee. Similarly, it is not held to be relevant that a mere eleven years later the country would be humiliated by an upstart Egyptian colonel. And so on.

We are also predictably treated to an agreeably evocative scamper through the more mundane aspects of 1945: rationing and black markets in a variety of settings; fuel shortages in Paris; and electioneering with Churchill and Harold Laski. And we are reminded that Mother Nature had not been greatly disturbed by the years of warfare: the spring of 1945 in Great Britain was one of the most beautiful in living memory. "Day after day it continues", wrote L. F. Easterbrook in the *News Chronicle*, "with the fresh green of the new leaves *showing sage-coloured against* the pearly sky in the early mornings and then the June warmth under the blue vault of the heavens."

This book, then, contains a great deal of regurgitated pap. And I do not doubt that most British readers would receive it today almost as uncritically and complacently as when the relevant newspapers were first produced. In short, we are a nation possessing such singular qualities that we are able to endure a catastrophic failure in a world war and even after forty years still fail to realize it.

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Purposeful children

Beryl Bainbridge

PATRICK MAYHEW (Editor)
One Family's War
237pp. Hutchinson. £10.95.
0091602087
CARLTON JACKSON
Who Will Take Our Children?
217pp. Methuen. £9.95.
0413581306

From 1939 to the end of the war, six young members of the Mayhew family, and two first cousins, the Howarths, representing between them the Army, the Navy, the RAF, Wrens, Home Guard and Fire Service, wrote to each other over a thousand letters describing their various wartime experiences. *One Family's War*, edited by Patrick Mayhew, with an introduction by his brother Christopher, is constructed from a selection out of this fascinating correspondence, valuable not only for its first-hand accounts of war, but for the picture it builds on every page of a privileged class whose *golden boys left the playing fields of their public* schools for the killing fields of land and sea and air.

It's a curious fact that the generation who came after, who were still in short trousers when the war ended, though vividly retaining memories of barrage balloons and absent *bananas and blitzkrieg nights spent under din*ing-room tables, cannot remember one single conversation – not even when the British Expeditionary Force came home beaten from Dunkirk – which seemed to hint that the war might be lost. Considering the way it was, how ill-prepared we were, it's a wonder that childhood wasn't filled with careless talk of panic and defeat. And yet, reading the Mayhew letters it becomes obvious that doubt did exist, and fear, and equally evident that in those far-off hellish days people lived at last in what J. B. Priestley called "a community with a noble common purpose".

What a world it was then! How seriously the young took matters of religion, the future, the vexing business of living and dying. Patrick Mayhew, twenty years old, socialist, Christian pacifist, and stretcher-bearer in France, wrote angrily of the negative stance taken by the Church of England – "a hypocrital lot are our C of E; they're even a reserved occupation, being, I suppose, too holy to kill but used to encourage others to do it for them. They've set Christianity back years and countless years." Kicking his heels in a billet in a mining village during the phoney war, he remembers a shooting-party back home, and a conversation in which friends discussed the fact that slum children really did have lice and were underfed, and wonders:

> What will the effect of the slow awakening of the upper, ruling class be? Can it die again or will it lead to a real rehousing programme, a determination to see real family allowances . . . free education . . . the abolition of juvenile employment? Is there really *any chance of a land "fit for heroes"* – not the "warrior" heroes but those who keep a sense of humour on six children and thirty-five shillings a week?

Young Paul Mayhew, having left Oxford and joined the RAF, writes of the imbecilities of war. He wasn't personally afraid of death, and only a little scared of dying.

> I haven't any overwhelming attachment to living . . . but all this doesn't bring one pence of mind. More particularly, I know I'm in the wrong place myself: emotionally and logically I am convinced that war is not and never can be morally right . . . and yet it all comes back to the plain fact that I haven't the guts to do anything about it . . . taken all round, rather a failure of a life, whose loss will not be very great.

In 1942 the engine of his aircraft stalled as he was coming in to land and he was killed. He was twenty-three years old.

This is a lovely book and I urge that it should be read. Perhaps Christopher Mayhew should have the last word. In his introduction he writes:

> It is particularly important today to avoid thinking about war in general terms. The first nuclear exchange will obliterate all questions of victory or defeat, attack or defence, right or wrong; only the suffering of this or that particular person or family (multiplied an unimaginable number of times) will have meaning. Is this what Dylan Thomas meant by the strange last line in his war poem "After the first death, there is no other"?

Who Will Take Our Children? is Carlton Jackson's account of evacuation during the war years, and its effect on social life. It's an interesting subject; the separation traumas suffered by evacuees must have profoundly affected attitudes to their own children. Unfortunately the book is a bit dull, and tells us nothing, beyond statistics, that we didn't already know, or could not have worked out for ourselves.

"The question for the tribunal", wrote William Douglas Home to his parents in 1939, "is not whether I'm a *conscientious* objector but whether I'm to be forced to kill people who, in my opinion, have had a raw deal." The tribunal took a less refined view and sentenced him to a year's imprisonment with hard labour. The letter is reproduced along with others the young playwright wrote home during the war in *Slow of Commission* (96pp. *Salisbury*: Michael Russell. £5.95. 0 85955 115 6), explaining, at first, why he had refused to obey the order and, later, how he is finding life in Wakefield Prison: "They scratch off the days on little almanacs, thus making everything twice as long. I learnt not to do that at Eton! As Evelyn Waugh so rightly says, 'Any man who has been to an English public school will feel very much at home in prison.'"

In the place of greatest danger

Michael Carver

JOHN TERRAINE
The Right of the Line
840pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £14.95.
0340266449

For a history of the RAF in the Second World War, the choice both of author and of title may, to some, seem odd. John Terraine is well known, not only as an expert on the history of the First World War, but specifically as a champion of Haig and of the Western Front School. The basic outlook of the Royal Air Force, of its founder, Trenchard, and of all his disciples who became the senior officers of the Force in the Second World War, would seem to be in stark opposition to that view. The right of the line, in army terms, is reserved to those arms or *regiments* senior by tradition. But the RAF was, and remains, the junior, taking its place on a joint service parade on the left of the line.

The author justifies his title by reference to an older tradition, which did not equate honour with seniority, but looked upon being chosen to take the "place of greatest danger" as *the highest* honour. His argument is that, in the war against Germany and Italy between 1939 and 1945 (he does not cover the war against Japan), it was the Royal Air Force of all Britain's armed forces which found itself in that place of highest honour; and that each of its main components occupied that place in turn. *First, in 1940, Fighter Command; then Bom*ber Command, because no other part of the British armed forces (other than a small force in the Mediterranean) could be brought to bear against Germany; then, at the height of the Battle of the Atlantic in 1942–3, Coastal Command; and finally the Tactical Air Forces, and *all the components of the air force together, in* support of the operations of the army in North Africa, Italy and north-west Europe.

The choice of Haig's biographer as author is not as strange as it might seem. His voice, crying in the wilderness, as it may have seemed *to him*, has consistently been heard criticizing *the popular reaction to the losses suffered by* the British army on the Western Front in the First World War, the belief that they were in vain, that Haig and his army commanders were incompetent, unfeeling and unimaginative idiots and that there were other – less costly – ways of defeating the Germans. He has also *pointed* out that both those, like Fuller, Liddell Hart and their disciples, who believed in an indirect approach on land, and those who thought that air power alone would suffice, were gravely misguided; and that, as a nation, civilian and military alike, we made a fatal error in refusing to face up to the reality, espoused both by Clausewitz and Mahan, that the defeat of the enemy's armed forces was the only true object of strategy. We could not pursue an effective policy, diplomatic or military, unless we accepted that, and prepared adequate forces for that purpose.

Terraine's first target is therefore the legacy of Trenchard: the attitude of the Air Staff in the years before 1939, which persisted, in one form or another, in the persons of Portal and Harris, right through to the end of the war. This was the belief that Germany could be defeated by air bombing alone, making the despatch of an expeditionary force across the Channel (in 1939 or in 1944) as unnecessary, in their eyes, as it was undesirable. They grossly overrated both the physical destruction which the aircraft and bombs of the time could inflict, and the effect they would have on civilian morale. And this led to fatal misjudgments about the effectiveness of air defence as well as about what an offensive force could achieve. Those were, what the author calls, "the years of penury and false doctrine", in which exaggeration of the threat from the German air force, to which Churchill contributed so much, led to a disregard of the major threat, the resurrection of the German army.

These illusions about the reality of war were redeemed by the ability and efficiency of some little-known senior, and some less senior, officers, who, in the rearmament period laid firm foundations for the future, both in terms of training and organization and in specifications of aircraft, which bore *fruit in the war*. Ellington, Ludlow-Hewitt, Newall and Dowding all receive praise for their contribution. They were supported lower down in the hierarchy by those who came to prominence later, like Portal, Harris, Tedder, Coningham and Slessor. The Spitfire, Hurricane and Lancaster were all developed in this period, although the last did not see action until 1943.

In the Battle of Britain, Terraine takes the side of Dowding against Leigh-Mallory and Bader, and his case is convincing. The large section of the book devoted to the fortunes and misfortunes of Bomber Command pulls no punches. The author is unstinting in his praise for the courage of the bomber crews, and he describes the severe physical and psychological problems they faced with sympathy and understanding. He points out that they were forced into area bombing at night partly because, through the inadequacies of their equipment, notably navigational, they were incapable of doing anything else. But he also makes it very clear that it was remarkably ineffective, especially in achieving its principal aim – undermining the enemy's will and ability to continue the war. He accepts that there was no alternative. Bomber Command was virtually the only British force directly attacking Germany. Its morale could only be maintained if it continued to operate and targets had to be chosen which it could attack without unacceptable losses: hence the destruction of places like Lübeck. Its role was very similar to that of the British Expeditionary Force in France in the First World War, and Harris was its Haig. Bomber Command's true contribution to eventual victory, together with the US Eighth Air Force, was to force Germany to expend an increasing effort on air defence and to see its *Luftwaffe* destroyed in the process. It was defeat of the enemy's armed forces, including his air force, that turned out to be the true function of the Royal Air Force.

Wars, however, are not won by one type of force alone. Terraine strongly criticizes the "pure" airmen for their reluctance, until quite late in the day, to devote sufficient effort to supporting the navy and the army. A greater allocation of long-range aircraft, and new navigational and target-acquisition aids, to Coastal Command could have had significant effects on the Battle of the Atlantic. It was in the Middle East, under Tedder and Coningham, that effective air support to the army and navy combined was developed. The contribution of the concepts and procedures developed in the Mediterranean was decisive for the success of the Normandy landings and the subsequent campaign in north-west Europe. In the controversy which surrounds that, John Terraine sides with the elaborate hierarchy of air marshals in their severe criticism of not only Montgomery himself but also the fighting qualities of the soldiers he commanded. Terraine is in the habit of comparing the organization and the performance of the British army in the Second World War unfavourably with that in the First, but he is too prejudiced on this matter to be able to take an objective view of that controversy. His book will therefore be as unpopular with many soldiers as it will be with many airmen.

There is no doubt that in writing it, Terraine has made a very valuable contribution to military history. It is difficult to make the description of air operations easy to read. The author tends to err in the direction of "photocopy" history: numerous excerpts from the writings of others, carefully chosen to support his own case, and lending it an air of additional authority, reinforced by his extensive use of official sources. It does not appear that he has delved deep behind them, probably because he has not himself the technical knowledge to have done so profitably. This thick volume will have a place of honour on the right of the bookshelf.

In other parts of the field

Keith Jeffery

CHARLES A. JELLISON
Besieged: The World War II Ordeal of Malta, 1940–1942
288pp. University Press of New England, distributed by Trevor Brown Associates, Suite 7b, 26, Charing Cross Road, London WC2. £19.95.
0874513138
WILLIAM SEYMOUR
British Special Forces
334pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £15.
0283998738
KEN TOUT
Tank!
208pp. Robert Hale. £9.95.
0709022778
MAX HASTINGS and GEORGE STEVENS
Victory in Europe: D-Day to VE Day
192pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10.95.
0297786504

These four books broadly represent different approaches to the history of war: that of academic and non-academic historians; the autobiographical approach and the popular. None of them, however, sits easily within a narrowly defined category. They each possess qualities which render them more than simply "academic" or "popular".

Charles A. Jellison's treatment of the siege of Malta illustrates other problems of definition. The publishers say that the book is "not a military history", but rather "social history set against the backdrop of military events". This fine distinction may have been included to protect Professor Jellison's reputation, since for some time now it has not been fashionable for respectable historians to write "military" history. *Besieged*, moreover, is social history of a rather old-fashioned variety: there is no sociological analysis, the book is completely free from jargon and it contains only one statistical table. It is none the worse for that. Jellison has elegantly stitched together official records, contemporary accounts and many interviews with Maltese people themselves – this particularly successfully – into an exceptionally vivid narrative of the island's two-year ordeal.

Between June 1940 and the autumn of 1942 Malta suffered appalling punishment from Axis air bombardment. In January 1942 alone there were 263 raids. This Mediterranean "Battle of Britain" was seized upon by British propagandists as exemplifying the indomitable will of the British Empire's war effort. Jellison examines the events of these years from a Maltese perspective and describes how the fortitude of the islanders was not so much the result of affection for or loyalty to the British (although this undoubtedly existed) as an instinctive response to a sustained external threat. It is a most dramatic, and frequently moving, story. Jellison does not spare us any of the random, meaningless deaths or the insanitary horrors of the makeshift bomb shelters, although he is inclined to ignore the seamier *side of Valetta life. What happened, for exam*ple, to the celebrated brothels in "The Gut"? The impact of the British garrison on the local community is really covered only at commissioned-officer level. There is much richness here: for example the stern Puritan Governor, General Sir William Dobbie, defending the island like General Gordon, with a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other. Jellison believes that there could hardly have been a better choice for Governor than Dobbie. Others disagreed. "He spent so much time on his knees praying", recalled one British officer, "that he couldn't see what was going on all around him."

But this is primarily a book about the Maltese themselves, their courage and the privations of the siege. One of the greatest enemies was hunger. In the summer of 1942 food was so scarce that the ration was cut to half of that available in Britain. Vitamin tablets were dis*tributed because the Colonial Office feared* that the islanders' reproductive powers would be damaged by the absence of vitamin E. According to his biographer, Lord Gort, Dobbie's successor, optimistically believed that close proximity in the shelters would ensure continued conception. Jellison does not *reveal if this was so.*

While William Seymour is not an academic, he can hardly be described as an amateur historian. This is his fifth book, and he has deliberately set out to write a factual history of a topic much abused by what might be called the G. A. Henty school of narrative. One of the *problems of writing serious military history is* balancing the popular aspects (pictures, human interest stories, and so on) with the more sedate virtues of scholarship, such as attention to detail and accuracy. Seymour has achieved a realistic balance in this book, although occasionally he lapses into the language of Bulldog Drummond. *Special forces*, he tells us, are well suited to "the British character with its love of adventure, willingness to accept hardship and risk, and propensity for individualism". The British, we discover, also have a unique aptitude for specialized élite units.

Yet the book demythologizes both famous *and obscure special forces without belittling* their achievements. With the Commandos and the Special Air Service Seymour covers familiar ground, but the activities of Combined Operations Pilotage Parties and the Royal Marine Boom Patrol Detachment are less well known. The book provides a valuable compendium of *special forces units and their operations from* the Second World War until the Falklands. One interesting topic which Seymour merely hints at concerns the impact of "special service" on individual soldiers and the psychological and social cost it may have entailed. There are occasional references to "misfits" *and tantalizing asides, for example that, too* much action "was to play on the nerves of some of the best". But the author does not expand on this topic, and the book as a whole leaves one *with the impression that his protean heroes* simply switched off after the war ended, becoming happy family men, Rotarians and pillars of their local communities.

This seems almost to have been the case with Ken Tout, author of *Tank!*, who since the war has worked for Oxfam, the Salvation Army and similar organizations. Tout was not part of any "special" force, but a conscripted soldier in the 1st Northamptonshire Yeomanry. Yet this is a very special book indeed. Covering a previously unremarked tank engagement eight weeks after D-Day, Tout gives an extraordinary minute-by-minute account of the tensions, pleasures, boredom and terror of conflict. It is a semi-fictionalized narrative. While the senior officers (and Tout himself) are real people, the tank crew in "Roger 3 Baker" are an amalgam of Tout's actual comrades. The book has the imaginative quality of really good fiction. It marvellously re-creates the tiny, enclosed *world of the tank soldier and the unexpected* intimacy of armoured warfare.

Not only is *Tank!* worth reading as military history, but also for its own sake as a memorable examination of camaraderie and men's emotions under stress, enlivened by Tout's cool irony. After all the fears of being grilled *alive "medium to well done, in two seconds* flat", he remarks that "the tank is a nice, clean, hygienic and civilised method of slaughter. . . . You don't even have to wipe your bayonet or wash your hands."

Victory in Europe demonstrates that "popular" – which in this case means illustrated – *military history need not necessarily be bad* history. The pictures in this volume add a dimension to our understanding of the war which is absent from the other volumes. George Stevens was a successful Hollywood film director – *Gunga Din* suitably among his credits – who was personally selected by *Eisenhower to direct a unit to film the progress* of the Allied armies. Official footage had to be shot in black-and-white, but Stevens also brought along a supply of rare 16mm colour film. The splendid pictures in this book are all drawn from Stevens's own "home movie" of D-Day and after, which remained virtually un*seen until his death in 1975. The pictures would* be remarkable enough merely for the fact that they are in colour, but they also testify amply to Stevens's skill as a cameraman. The people are especially unforgettable: Monty looks cheery; a civilian Frenchwoman carrying a Schmeisser machine-gun eyes the camera with a hesitant *smile; a strikingly youthful de Gaulle is suit*ably pugnacious and virtually all the German prisoners grin from ear to ear. Accompanying the illustrations, which end with the ruins of Berlin and versions of those currently popular pictures of British, American and Soviet soldiers fraternizing, is a workmanlike text by *Max Hastings, described on the dust jacket as* "Britain's leading war historian".

Security at a price

William V. O'Brien

ZE'EV SCHIFF and EHUD YA'ARI
Israel's Lebanon War
320pp. Allen and Unwin. £12.95.
004 923078 6

Ze'ev Schiff is the military correspondent of Israel's leading Hebrew newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, and author of several books on the Arab-Israeli wars; Ehud Ya'ari is Middle East affairs correspondent for Israeli television and has written on foreign and defence issues. In their book they bitterly condemn the policies which resulted in the 1982 Lebanon War, blaming these on the pervasive role of General "Arik" Sharon. The authors' combined expertise and depth of inside knowledge, and the strong feeling of indignation which they convey, make *Israel's Lebanon War compelling reading*. However, their very preoccupation with Sharon's role and the failure of the normal checks and balances of the Israeli political process diverts their attention from the substantive strategic problems which Israel faced and continues to face.

The Israelis' stance towards the PLO in Lebanon is traced in the light of its build-up of long-range artillery and rocket launchers capable of shelling northern Israeli population centres. Sustained hostilities had culminated in the cease-fire of July 21, 1981, negotiated by the US special envoy Philip Habib. Any Israeli government, probably, would have been obliged to devise strategies for removing the PLO military threat which had remained in place and continued to grow after the cease-fire. Just how Schiff and Ya'ari would have wanted the problem to be handled is unclear. Their concern is to tell the story of Sharon's *entrance into the Begin Cabinet in August* 1981 and of his successful efforts to manoeuvre Israel into the 1982 war. They contend that Sharon's true intentions went far beyond the need to remove the PLO threat to northern Israel and included the more controversial objectives of driving the Syrian forces out of Lebanon and of establishing a friendly, Christian-led Lebanese government; and that not only were these goals unrealistic but, more important, they were concealed by Sharon from the Cabinet and most of the commanders of the IDF (Israeli Defence Forces).

Schiff and Ya'ari show how Yitzhak Rabin's cautious policy of assisting the Lebanese Christians was changed for the worse by his much less restrained successor, Menachem Begin. A spurious alliance developed whereby the Israelis would rely on the Christians to take *care of Beirut and of the PLO concentrated* there, while the IDF would crush the PLO "state-within-state" in southern Lebanon But the Christians were only interested in luring Israel into a military intervention which would drive out the Syrians and make possible Bashir Gemayel's election as president. In the event, the Christians did no fighting on Israel's behalf and the Israelis were confronted with the very formidable problem of besieging Beirut, a development foreseen by Israeli intelligence but discounted by Sharon.

Hostilities with Syria were inevitable in any *large-scale Lebanese campaign. Ultimately* Israel pushed back the Syrians and destroyed the missiles installed in 1981, but at considerable cost and without permanent damage to *Syria's continued military and political presence*. Beirut was besieged under the glare of world-wide television. The PLO were finally expelled; but this success was marred by the Sabra and Chatila massacres which followed. Schiff (who played a part in the efforts to stop the slaughter) and Ya'ari reconstruct the events connected with the massacres and analyse the belated reaction of the Israeli government and the IDF. The Kahan Commission's findings confirm the general account given in the book. The authors, in a spirit of dedication to the values and traditions of Israel and the IDF, record the disastrous effect of the war and the Sabra and Chatila massacres on the faith and morale of the Israeli people and their armed forces.

They argue that Sharon's machinations damaged Israel's political and military decision making processes as well as her relations with the United States. To both the Israel Cabinet and United States Government (in particular the Secretary of State, Alexander Haig), Sharon held out the prospect of a quick strike against the PLO forces threatening Israel, reflected in Begin's original announcement that the IDF would only go forty kilometres into Lebanon. The objectives of removing the PLO from Beirut and of establishing a Bashir Gemayel government, as well as of expelling the Syrians, were not disclosed by Sharon.

The Cabinet, accordingly, never authorized his more ambitious goals except by *post facto* acquiescence. Nor did Haig's supposed "Green Light" apply to anything other than a limited strike in response to a "significant" PLO violation of the cease-fire. Clearly, the justification for some kind of attack on the PLO lay in Israel's strategic situation and not in fortuitous terrorist attacks – such as the one on Ambassador Shlomo Argov in London – which was the pretext put forward to satisfy the Israeli Cabinet and the United States Government. Sharon chose to conceal his intentions from his Cabinet colleagues and the Americans, rather than to risk their reaction to a plan which could however have been justified on strategic grounds.

Just how far Begin was surprised by the events in Lebanon seems to be *unclear*. Schiff and Ya'ari describe the prime minister as a willing accomplice to Sharon, uncritically accepting his explanations for developments as *the conflict widened*. A consequence of Sharon's misleading briefings to the Cabinet and to the United States Government was that the IDF could not employ the kind of tactics and strategy appropriate to a straightforward campaign. As a result, the invasion was not well conducted and proved more costly than it would have if Sharon's plans been openly accepted and authorized.

Two criticisms may be made of this important book: first, the authors succumb to the practice of putting quotation marks into conversations at which they were not present, in the style of David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* and Strobe Talbott's *Deadly Gambits*. This is journalism, not history. Schiff and Ya'ari studied thousands of documents and interviewed over 150 people. They could no doubt defend the quoted passages with evidence that such conversations occurred substantially as reported; but this is not the same thing as reproducing verbatim quotations.

Second, even if most of the claims made in the book are accepted and it is granted that Sharon's policies and conduct served Israel poorly, the question remains whether there were not some things that would have been done by any responsible Israeli government and military leadership. Schiff and Ya'ari do not really come to grips with the threats which Israel faced from 1981 on.

It made strategic sense to drive the PLO out of Lebanon and this entailed expelling them from Beirut. The 1982 war did succeed in destroying the PLO's military power; the cost was perhaps far too high – even if the disasters attending the withdrawal operation are left out of account – and certainly the processes involved were damaging to Israeli values and institutions. But Schiff and Ya'ari would have written a better book had they given their views as to how Israel should have handled its security problem. We would then have some indication of the deterrence and defence policies which a very different Israeli government should now adopt.

Meanwhile, the Israelis, having paid a heavy price for defeating the PLO, will probably seek consolation in the knowledge that Syria is now plagued with the problems confronting any state which intervenes in the Lebanese anarchy.

WORLD MILITARY PERSPECTIVES

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December 1984, 908 pages, illus., index, ISBN 0 86531 743 7, £70.75

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Doing it for each other

John Strawson

JULIAN THOMPSON
No Picnic: 3 Commando Brigade in the South Atlantic 1982
201pp. Secker and Warburg. £12.95.
0436 520524
HUGH McMANNERS
Falklands Commando
237pp. Kimber. £9.95.
0718305329

No Picnic and *Falklands Commando* are both accounts of the Falklands war, one by a senior commander, Brigadier (now Major-General) Julian Thompson, the other by an artillery captain, Hugh McManners, whose job it was to work with special forces and direct naval gunfire on to enemy positions. Both books are models of clear and simple writing.

The battle to recover the Falkland Islands had three phases – getting there, getting ashore and getting Port Stanley. In achieving the last two Brigadier Thompson showed what a cool and competent commander he is. He tells an absolutely factual story of the tasks carried out by his 3 Commando Brigade. His explanation of the organization, procedures and mechanics of amphibious operations is admirable, especially for readers without military experience. And his portraits of the men who *planned and fought the battle with him confirm* that the quality of his sailors, Royal Marines, airmen and soldiers provided his greatest strength.

3 Commando Brigade was, of course, the right formation to secure a beachhead on East Falkland in order to repossess the Islands. And much of their training in Norway and elsewhere made them particularly fit for conditions in the South Atlantic. Thompson reminds us of that special brand of humour – familiar to all who have served in the armed forces – with which Royal Marine instructors would demand the highest standards of endurance: "It's in the mind" or "It's only pain". But the truth of "train hard, fight easy" was never more surely demonstrated; and in being reinforced by 2 and 3 Parachute Battalions, 3 commando Brigade was fortunate indeed.

The most interesting parts of Thompson's story concern the landing to get a firm foothold ashore *and the hard-fought night battles for the* important ground west of Port Stanley. Incidentally, Thompson makes it clear that he did not wish to carry out the Goose Green operation. He was ordered to do it. But he admits that he was wrong not to permit 2 Para to use the Scorpion and Scimitar light tanks which could have made such a difference.

3 Commando Brigade's operations were characterized by sound planning, bold patrolling, brilliant SAS and SBS reconnaissance, improvisation necessitated by logistic restraints, the dogged courage of officers, NCOs and men, the indispensable part played by all *too few helicopters, the crucial role of artillery* and the superb teamwork of the armed services. We see why it was that Churchill once called the Royal Marines "the greatest corps in *the world*". It is, of course, only the story of his own Brigade's part in it all that Thompson tells. Therein lies the merit of his book, for he does not elaborate on what he himself did not know. We are wholly convinced by what he does tell us as to how his Brigade "had done what we had come 8,000 miles to do".

"The flashes of 4.5 inch shells", writes Thompson, "could be seen bursting among ribbons of tracer on Fanning Head where Captain McManners, Royal Artillery, was spotting for HMS *Antrim*". Hugh McManners's book tells the story from a "worm's eye view" with the aim of "conveying the flavour of life below decks and in the mountains". He explains that the job of a Commando Forward Observation Unit is to control the fire of the Royal Navy's guns from the ground, and that each team, like his own, is put ashore by boat, parachute or helicopter *before* the main force.

Captain McManners describes not only the operations he took part in, including initial landings at San Carlos, the Fox Bay raid on West Falkland and the Beagle Ridge action to support the capture of Port Stanley – all exciting enough – but also the day-to-day activities during preparation for battle, life on board various ships, the comradeship, ways to combat boredom. It is an immensly detailed but wholly real picture of what soldering is like. Things that matter, like food, letters from home, news of what's going on, are again made plain to us, just as the business of sheer survival under conditions of cold, wet, hunger and apprehension, is catalogued. It all rings true.

McManners's book fittingly complements Thompson's. Thompson's story is about his brigade; McManners's is about himself. We get to know them as their stories develop and we like what we get to know. One supremely important point is made by McManners when he talks about motivation – "*We did it* for each other". In writing these books about their experiences in what was a startling demonstration of Britain's military capability, Major-*General Thompson and Captain McManners* have rendered further great service both to their country and to their comrades in arms.

Ambiguous approaches

Philip Windsor

BRUCE D. PORTER
The USSR in Third World Conflicts: Soviet arms and diplomacy in local wars
248pp. Cambridge University Press. £20.
0521 26308 5
MICHAEL KREPON
Strategic Stalemate: Nuclear weapons and arms control in American politics
191pp. Macmillan. £22.50.
0333 38474 1
STROBE TALBOTT
Deadly Gambits: The Reagan administration and the stalemate in nuclear arms control
308pp. Picador (Pan Books). £9.95.
0330 28884 9
WALTER C. PATTERSON
The Plutonium Business and the Spread of the Bomb
272pp. Wildwood House. £11.50.
0704 5307 2 4
JOHN SIMPSON and ANTHONY G. McGREW *(Editors)*
The International Nuclear Non-Proliferation System: Challenges and choices
209pp. Macmillan. £25.
0333 38422 2
MICHAEL D. HOBKIRK
The Politics of Defence Budgeting: A study of organization and resource allocation in the United Kingdom and the United States
177pp. Macmillan. £20.
0333 38349 4
PETER TATCHELL
Democratic Defence: A non-nuclear alternative
223pp. GMP. Paperback, £3.95.
0946097 16 X

It was the two major democracies of the Second World War which gave birth to the Bomb. In historical order, first Britain and then the United States decided on its manufacture because they feared that Hitler might get there first. Later, it was the United States, after some initial reluctance, that developed the thermonuclear weapon because it feared that otherwise Stalin might get there first. The two totalitarian monsters of the first half of our century were the true begetters of the Bomb; but by now its existence, even if it is never used, threatens to rob words and values (like democracy) of their meaning.

A theme which runs throughout the books considered here is that governments are losing the power of decision over the use of nuclear energy (for peaceful or warlike purposes); over the configuration of weapons systems and their potential use; over the economic implications of defence planning; and over the utility of the "deterrent" *In avoiding and controlling* conflict. Anyone who still holds to the view fashionable in Britain that the American system is somehow more "open" or "accountable" than the British one should take heed of Michael Krepon's and Strobe Talbott's books which deal explicitly with the problems the United States encounters in trying to frame a policy of arms control and strategic doctrine, and with the way in which things actually get done in Washington. Anyone who believes that nuclear energy can provide an answer to the world's fuel problems without thereby *horribly* multiplying the risks of accident and war, should pause to read the history of the attempts to bring the production and application of plutonium under control. And, lest people be *unconvinced by Caspar Weinberger's* words that "this country does not have a defence policy, it only has a defence budget" they should look at the politics of defence budgeting in the United States and the United Kingdom.

One might easily conclude that the world is insane. But the attempts to grapple with these different kinds of problems are indicative not so much of the higher insanity as of a desperate and partial rationality, in which arguments from one approach are unanswerable in their own terms and are impotent against arguments advanced from another.

None of this was inevitable. Warnings of the course that the major powers were pursuing have been uttered again and again. David Lilienthal (the first Chairman of the United States Atomic Energy Commission) and Dean Acheson (at that time Under Secretary of State) warned that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without creating an uncontrollable system of manufacturing fissile *material* for nuclear weapons. Their warning was subsequently amplified at the beginning of the Eisenhower Administration in what came to be known as the "Candor Report". The response, *made for political reasons*, was the Atoms for Peace programme, which promptly spread nuclear know-how throughout the world. Occasionally, advice has been heeded. The decision not to build anti-ballistic missiles was a major victory for the arguments for "stability". But those arguments are under threat today; and the principal reason is that there is no grounding of common value between the super-powers.

For the non-use of the Bomb has now become the supreme goal of statesmanship, but not quite the ultimate repository of common value. The idea of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), first popularized in the United States some twenty years ago, assumed that it could be both. As such, it was meant to provide *guidelines for the SALT negotiations of the* 1970s. Robert McNamara, as Secretary for Defense, gave instructions to the first team of American negotiators at SALT to explore with their Soviet counterparts whether they could share a common "philosophy of deterrence". But the Soviet response was a blunt refusal; and MAD never became a strategic policy. At best, it represented a vague aspiration towards some kind of régime for the avoidance of nuclear war – an aspiration continually interrupted by sharpening conflicts of value, and by a proliferation of new strategic doctrines on the part of the United States and new strategic systems on the part of the Soviet Union. Both the doctrines and the systems seemed to imply (at least to suspicious observers from the other side) that it might be possible after all to contain, and thereby win, a nuclear war. So even the goal of non-use was now coming into doubt.

In such circumstances, it is not surprising that the SALT negotiations were widely held to be a failure (the second SALT agreement came five years later than originally expected, and was by then largely irrelevant to the suspi*cions each super-power entertained of the* other). But as the suspicions multiplied, so did doubts about the utility of nuclear deterrence and the very nature of the nuclear threat. And the ambiguity also bred internal political conflicts about how to deal with the suspicion. In the American context, the pattern runs roughly thus: it is widely believed that MAD has conspicuously failed to provide a régime of political agreement, and the Soviet Union might be embarking on a campaign of global expansionism. It might also be preparing to win a war in Europe through its build-up of conventional forces and through the development of new nuclear systems to back them – notably the SS20s. In addition the Russians are thought to have developed almost to the maximum the number of intercontinental *strategic weapons permitted* under the SALT agreements, and seem able to threaten a pre-emptive strike at America's most accurate, land-based, missiles. In these *circumstances*, the already strained credibility of the American guarantee to Western Europe might soon vanish altogether – a favourite theme of Henry Kissinger's for several years.

There is a choice of American responses to these developments. Washington could seek new arms control agreements on a more radical basis than before; or it could deploy new weapons systems in both the United States and Western Europe; or else it could try to move away from nuclear deterrence altogether, this last attempt taking the form of the "Star Wars" programme. Needless to say, it has done all three, which makes policy a *little hard to* follow.

It also fuels Soviet suspicions. These are that the United States has never agreed to settle for a pattern of *sustained stability* on a basis of equality, but that it is always seeking some technological advantage. At present, by combining new systems carrying warheads of great *accuracy* with the ultimate threat of being able to protect itself against retaliation altogether, it might be preparing to win a strategic war against the Soviet Union.

This is the background to the arms control negotiations which are now taking place at Geneva. As far as possible, the diplomats of both sides will strive to ensure that the talks are "dislinked" from other issues, such as their interpretation of each other's behaviour in the world. The history of the SALT talks is instructive here: at the outset, the United States hoped that the SALT process would be conducive towards establishing some form of co-operation in, for example, the Middle East. Yet, from being an instrument for managing Soviet behaviour, the talks became, at the end of the day, a hostage to that behaviour – so *much so that President Carter did not even* send the SALT II Treaty to the Senate for ratification, knowing full well that after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it didn't stand a chance. Yet will questions of linkage creep in again, especially when a number of activists in Washington are hostile to the present negotiations? Here, the question of Soviet activity needs to be considered as coolly as possible. *The USSR in Third World Conflicts* provides a reasoned analysis which should help. Bruce D. Porter goes both by case-studies (five of them) and by the available documentary evidence of *the Soviet approach. He makes it clear that in* the course of the 1970s, the Soviet approach has become more ideological, placing less reliance on the "bourgeois nationalists" of yesteryear, and more on allies that are reliable in its own terms. A power struggle is going on all right, but not an all-out competition of the kind which makes arms control negotiations useless. In these terms, the decks can be cleared for the attempt to reach agreement. But the many types of ambiguity which beset the talks still make it very difficult for Washington to define its own approach.

An important and enlightening guide to the nature of American deliberations is given by Michael Krepon in *Strategic Stalemate*. He tackles both the arms control issues themselves – *what is meant by parity, what it is possible to* negotiate and what it is not and the problems of verification once an agreement is reached – and the politics of these issues in the internal American process. What appears at the beginning to be a somewhat schematic presentation of the way the issues and priorities are viewed comes in handy later when he discusses the nature of negotiation: not only between the super-powers but also among the contending factions in the perpetual turf-match that is Washington. It becomes clear that real and difficult questions like that of verification also come to serve a ritualistic purpose, as a way of defining the different protagonists' approaches to a whole range of issues, rather than as a means of balancing risks. Dr Krepon's conclusion is that a *new* approach to arms control is needed, relying more on tactic or informal agreements than on the formal process of negotiated holding-operations. This implies the possibility of an evolutionary approach to a common "philosophy of deterrence" but also demands that the United States as a comity must abandon its either/or approach in favour of self-confidence combined with a willingness to explore the path to survival – even with an adversary that is frequently malevolent but not altogether unreasoning.

But there's the rub. *If attitudes to the issues* themselves are determined primarily in terms of attitudes to the Soviet Union as such, and secondarily in terms of Washington in-fighting, is there any chance of achieving the kind of political consensus inherent in Krepon's prescription? The prospects are rather uncertain.

One reason is that the sheer complexity of the problems gives plenty of latitude to attitudes. It is standard procedure, for example, to argue that the United States should seek arms control agreements which are "meaningful and verifiable".

That kind of formula helps to keep the more visceral anti-Soviet forces at bay. Yet what is meaningful – for example, controls on the number of warheads that can be attached to a *missile or the number of missiles that can be* fired from a re-usable launcher, or whether cruise missiles are tipped with nuclear or conventional warheads – is not necessarily verifiable. And what is verifiable – for example, the number of launchers possessed by either side

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or the rate of replacement of old systems by new – is not necessarily meaningful. Such difficulties are not beyond resolution, but without some prior measure of political agreement, they offer rich opportunities, for those who are either opposed to arms control *per se* or those who wish to maintain some kind of strategic "bargaining edge", to scupper any approach to negotiation that might imply the sacrifice of potential advantage, or the beginnings of a fiduciary relationship.

In throwing light on questions such as these Strobe Talbott's *Deadly Gambits* has acquired popularity on both sides of the Atlantic. It is not actually very good as a guide to some of the complexities – in particular it is confusing about the relationship between first and second-strike *systems* and a first attack *role* – but it is easy to read, and fills out in incisive detail the analysis offered by Krepon of the politics of the issues. At times it is both hilarious and horrifying. President Reagan's court is presented as being composed both of an intricate *bureaucracy, tailor-made for protracted* power-struggles, and a pre-medieval monarchy, in which would-be barons jostle desperately for the king's ear and where the most banal political ploy passes for a Machiavellian masterpiece. Sometimes, the only hope of getting anything done lies in by-passing the system altogether, as Paul Nitze tried to do with the famous "walk in the woods" formula during the Intermedinte Nuclear Forces negotiations. But the hope is slim: the monarch must still give his approval, and he seems to have neither the patience nor the wit to understand what is involved. In such a setting the concerns of the West European governments stand very little chance of being heard or understood, while the favoured approach to dealing with the Russians is that the United States should "tough it out". This is enough to make one's eyebrows quiver, but it is made worse by the fact that there is very little agreement on what the arms control negotiations are *for* in the first place.

The INF (Intermediate Nuclear Forces) talks were for some an exercise in alliance management – placating the "bloody Germans", to use Helmut Schmidt's phrase; for others, they were a way of ending the legacy of the SALT talks and the whole arms control era; for a very few they meant a serious attempt to reach agreement on limiting the arms race. Similar confusion beset the approach to the START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks) process. Whether the suspension of these talks and the new approach to more comprehensive negotiations at Geneva will help to resolve such problems is an open question; but the auguries are not hopeful. The question of what purpose the Strategic Defence Initiative programme should serve, and the accompanying disputes with European governments about its role in the negotiations, sound like familiar echoes from the past. American opponents of the arms control process, like Richard Perle, have a point when they argue that unless arms control is thoroughly comprehensive it is nefarious, because the imposition of arbitrary limitations on some categories of weapons merely encourages the emergence of unforeseen systems. But in the current attempt, precisely to frame a comprehensive approach, it is surely difficult *not* to include a system which can be foreseen but of which the qualities are not yet tested: if, that is, arms control is to meet Mr Perle's own criteria. The "Star Wars" programme indicates again that part of the trouble is a kind of nuclear nationalism behind much of the American approach (behind that of the Soviet Union too, no doubt, but the State Publishing House in Moscow does not produce books such as these) which makes it hard to tell whether the United States is seeking real stability in future crises, or whether it wants stability plus a bit of advantage so that it can "win" a crisis if it comes. Krepon and Talbott suggest that such an aim is illusory, but at present the Strategic Defence Initiative will go marching on.

Its progress will be assisted by the nuclear nationalism of other countries. One of the arguments marshalled by its proponents is that even if "Star Wars" provides a shield which is a good deal less than perfect against Soviet attack, it will still be very useful against threats from other, irrational, nuclear powers if (or as) proliferation spreads. What is certainly clear is that control over this process has by now become so inadequate as to be virtually meaningless. This is largely due to the widespread obsession with breeder reactors as an answer to the world's energy problems and the consequent *commercial traffic in an element only* discovered in minute quantities in 1940 – plutonium. In *The Plutonium Business*, Walter C. Patterson makes the mysteries of production, separation and recycling comprehensible to the layman and discusses the consequent risks. If present plans proceed, there will be enough commercially available plutonium in the world by the year 2000 to make 100,000 nuclear bombs. Meltdown has already occurred in one reactor (near Detroit in 1955) and been narrowly averted in others. Seepage of radioactive waste is becoming commonplace in countries with large-scale nuclear programmes; and the problems of how to store radioactive material with enormously long half-lives has only been tackled on a makeshift basis. The expense and inefficiency of breeder reactors has slowed down the introduction of ambitious projects in many states, but the declared intentions remain the same. Mr Patterson makes no bones about the fact that he is writing a tract for the times, and it reads occasionally like a sermon, *but his contentions are forcefully argued and* are rather frightening – particularly that the spread of plutonium is making nuclear weapons available to people or nations not educated by the Bomb.

He is borne out in this by the arguments of a seminar held in London in 1982. Most books which emerge from symposia lack a recognizable focus or direction. *The International Nuclear Non-Proliferation System* has both. The system is breaking down. The efforts alike of the International Atomic Energy Authority and of the supplier nations organized in the London Club are insufficient to prevent a modestly ingenious state from turning a peaceful nuclear programme into the basis for a nuclear arsenal. Politics and nationalism among the advanced nuclear countries have got in the way, of course. The United States, rich in uranium, declares war on plutonium without affecting its own interests. Certain European countries seem at times to be almost stupefyingly frivolous in their determination to capture a *lucrative export market without anything* like adequate safeguards. Or perhaps it is only to spite the Americans? The situation is not yet by any means uncontrollable, John Simpson argues at the end, but the risks are there and the need for reform of the system is urgent. Yet, as he also points out, there is still no political consensus on the nature of the proliferation problem, let alone on policies for dealing with it.

The politicization of the international attempts to provide safeguards against nuclear proliferation is partly due to the fact that the Non-Proliferation Treaty not only seemed to *discriminate against states* which did not possess nuclear weapons, but also explicitly committed those which did to bring their own arms programmes under control. That implied arms control agreements at the international level, and also, within that context, a system of prudent domestic management. It turns out to have been a tall order. Michael D. Hobkirk draws on his own broad experience at the Ministry of Defence in writing about *The Politics of Defence Budgeting*. He provides an admirably lucid summary of the central organizations of the bureaucracy in both the United States and Britain; he also shows how controls and procedures operate, including the rules of the game whereby reluctant Treasury officials or suspicious Congressmen can be won over; and he discusses the pressures of inter-service rivalry in the eternal struggle for resource allocation. Reasonable and rational people try within such structures to produce a coherent overall defence policy, but this is still a matter of the utmost difficulty in the United States. The United Kingdom seems to have fared somewhat better since the reorganization of the Ministry of Defence in 1964, but has made up for this by a succession of financial crises. For some years the trend towards permanent shrinkage was reversed, but it is now with us again – and in these circumstances it is astonishing that the Trident decision has not caused even wider controversy than it has. It is some decision, too, for one of the sponsoring states of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Control, of the arms race, of the traffic in plutonium and the risks of widespread nuclear proliferation, even of defence policy-making, has come under such a multitude of pressures that it is increasingly difficult to maintain. Is *there a way back to any kind of consensus* based on at least a common approach to common risks, if not to shared values? Peter Tatchell proposes that we should start at home. *Democratic Defence* suggests that the democratization of British defence forces and the evolution of a credible non-nuclear defence policy should go hand in hand. That is central to an argument which might otherwise appear to hit at too many targets, and in many respects it commands sympathy. But he argues too much from the Second World War, suggesting at one point that while the concrete actualities have changed, the basic principles have not. This is to support his argument that citizens' armies in one form or another can tie down an aggressor, and so help to deter attack. But at other points, he shows a keen awareness of the potential of new weapons systems – for defence. It might also be worth examining those available to an attacker, for example the use of sophisticated sensors which would be highly effective in the right, ruthless hands. He further suggests bringing the British forces back home from Germany on the grounds that their presence in Germany is provocative to the Soviet Union; but he equally makes it clear that they should be ready to go to the aid of Germany if it is attacked. That does sound rather like getting the worst of two worlds, and spoils what would otherwise be a strong argument for changing the present system of Nato strategy in Germany to one which would not rely on nuclear weapons and would still provide an effective deterrent against attack. Certainly such a strategy is feasible.

It might even be the beginning of a process in which more coherent defence decisions could be made, so allowing for greater progress in arms control, which in its turn might permit the sponsoring states of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to press for greater international safeguards against proliferation, and thereby begin a small movement back to sanity. *That, now* is a pretty tall order.

Born 1912

I

In various works (such as the diaries
Of Beatrice Webb) I come across accounts
Of the tropical summer of 1911 –
Summer of strikes, as strange as 1912's
Moroccan crisis, when the great powers rehearsed
What in my infancy and youth I called
The Great War. All the years my parents knew
Of thrift and modesty and sensible art
Began to be cancelled.
Now long other years
Have passed, and miraculously I'm still here;
And writing in Tennysonian iambics;
And bringing in the common things of life –
A pigeon jumping down a step, and landing
On both feet, like an infant. Though I feel
Perhaps my age prevents my taking up
The cheap and shameless offer in the green-
Grocer's by some permissive 'loose bananas'.

II

I ponder on a colleague's deep enquiry
About my health. For, after all, he's new;
Don't know him well. Do I look thin and pine
After the illness I've taken more or less
In my stride, or is he simply manifesting
The human virtue old age tends to make
Old age forget?
I come home from the meeting
And hear *The Planets* on the radio –
Astounding and daring work, though scarcely younger
Than I, apparently so close to death.

III

'Most resonant of string keys', D major – so
I read; somewhat mysterious words to one
Quite ignorant of musical technique.
The phrase applies to a Mendelssohn quartet –
Composer still not wholly unmaligned
After a century and a half. That keys
Still enter into aesthetic consciousness,
One renders faintly unbelieving thanks.
Just as I journey a mere hundred yards
To shop, and return with poetic images –
For instance, a neighbour lost in thought before
A supermarket shelf, her beauty changed
(Time infiltrating through relaxed defences)
To the uncertainties of middle-age;
An age nonetheless quite ignorant of war.

ROY FULLER

Controversial claims

Walter Elkan

GERALD M. MEIER and DUDLEY SEERS (Editors)
Pioneers in Development
372pp. Oxford University Press. £34.
0 19 520422 2

At the end of the Second World War development economics did not exist. Whether it does now is still a subject of much debate. On the one hand, there are those who argue that economists can contribute to the development of Third World countries simply by applying elementary economic theory to the problems facing them. At the same time there are those who argue that the less developed countries are so different that a special kind of economics is needed if it is to be of any use. Be that as it may, there is little doubt that there now exists a "development economics" in a different sense, namely a very large body of writings that is *homogeneous*, and different from other branches of economics in that it is exclusively concerned with Third World problems. A large number of economists now devote most of their energies to the solution of these problems. However, in the universities, in the offices of Third World Governments and in the national and multilateral foreign aid agencies a complete consensus about causes and cures by no means prevails.

The ten economists celebrated in this lavishly produced volume are given the accolade of having been (with others, some no longer alive) pioneers in development. P. T. Bauer, Colin Clark, A. O. Hirschman, Arthur Lewis, Gunnar Myrdal, Raoul Prebisch, P. N. Rosenstein-Rodan, W. W. Rostow, Hans Singer and Jan Tinbergen were each invited by the World Bank to give a lecture which would both provide some insight into the main themes of their early work in the 1940s and 50s and also be an opportunity "to reassess it, to reconsider their assumptions, concepts and policy prescriptions" in the light of how development has in fact proceeded since their pioneering days. These lectures are presented here together with one or more commentaries on each by slightly younger economists including Hla Myint and Paul Streeten (who might themselves have qualified as "pioneers"), as well as by Michael Lipton, Jagdish N. Bhagwati, Bella Belassa and many others.

Many of the lectures are fascinating for their authors' anecdotal accounts of "what gave them the idea". Most of them emerge as people who cared about the state of the world, for which this reviewer at any rate is prepared to forgive them for having been the instigators, or at any rate the validators, of some quite appall*ing mistakes that have long dominated de*velopment policies, and thus retarded material progress in many countries by decades. Lord Bauer is rather the odd man out, having always swum against the tide and been much reviled as reactionary and uncaring. Though he cannot ever have entered the portals of the World Bank before, he may in the end prove to have exerted the greatest influence for good, though very few will own up to having been influenced by him. Hirschman, too, has been a great debunker and enjoyed his role of *enfant terrible*.

It is now almost incredible to recall how mesmerized many of us were by arguments *claiming that industrialization was the high* road to development, or by assertions demonstrating that the terms of trade would always operate against primary producers, or by the advocacy of "balanced growth". The argument for industrialization sought to show that the affluent countries had become so because they had built up power-driven manufacturing industries embodying technologies which enhanced productivity in ways that would have been impossible in economies primarily devoted to agriculture. There, if poor countries wanted to catch up, they too had to industrialize. Besides, it was held that as incomes began *to rise so people would spend a rising proportion* on the increase on manufactured goods, thus providing a market for the new factories. Industrialization was therefore expected to expand the home market since it was not thought possible to compete with the older industrial countries in their own markets (though Japan had done so successfully in the inter-war years). The fact that very few countries were likely to have the human capacities or the cultural attributes to bring this off was quietly ignored or regarded as an ignoble doubt. One consequence has been the total neglect of agriculture in less developed countries, resulting in the desperate food shortages which have afflicted large parts of Africa. Industrialization had promised to raise the standard of living. This would have entailed increasing productivity – whether in industry or agriculture is immaterial. But hopelessly inefficient industries were no help to anybody.

The argument for industrialization was reinforced by a very widespread belief, founded on a historical study by Prebisch, that primary producers – and that is what most less developed countries were – would have to sell ever larger quantities of cash crops or minerals for a given quantity of manufacured imports.

René Magritte's "L'histoire centrale", 1928, is reproduced from Magritte *by Suzi Gablik (203pp, with 19 colour and 209 black-and-white illustrations. Thames and Hudson. £13.95. 0 500 20199 4).*

This meant that there was an innate tendency for the terms of trade to move against primary products. That study was later totally discredited but not until it had been powerfully embellished and reinforced by Ragnar Nurkse, who explained the supposedly observed phenomena by reference to Engel's Law (so-called after Ernst Engel), which says that as people's incomes rise an ever smaller proportion is spent on food, that as manufacturing becomes *more sophisticated, machines become lighter*, using less imported metal, and that synthetics will gradually replace the raw materials grown in the tropics. It was not until the late 1960s that these ideas were seriously challenged and either refuted or shown to be irrelevant. Synthetics have been developed in response both to shortages and to high prices of the natural product (which had often been encouraged by a failure to modernize agriculture). As for food, what does it matter if people spend a smaller proportion of their income on it so long as total demand continues to increase?

Another claim often made was that industrialization, if it was to succeed, had to be a carefully planned, balanced process, that it was essential to break out of a "vicious circle of poverty" – low incomes generating inadequate savings for investment and thus perpetuating low incomes – by a massive injection of foreign aid. Moreover, Rosenstein-Rodan persuaded us that it needed a "Big Push" to create a whole range of industries simultaneously so that the increased wages earned in one could be spent on the outputs of the others, in order to pre*vent the process petering out. To this Rostow* added the idea of a take-off into self-sustained growth (likening economic development to the departure of an aeroplane) which he purported to have found not only in Britain's first Industrial Revolution but in many other countries since. The balanced growth bubble was wonderfully burst by another of the "pioneers". Hirschman, who argued that there was nothing more likely to trigger off development than a thorough *lack* of balance.

Rereading some of these ideas in this book, one is forced to the conclusion that it is really not surprising that so many of us were persuaded by them. For whatever their authors may lack, no one will dispute that a number of them are intellectual giants, no less than three of whom hold the Nobel Prize for economics. Another attribute most of them share (in contrast to some of their commentators) is a remarkable talent for lucid and persuasive exposition. Economists have acquired the reputation of being generally rather boring and narrow but no one could conceivably so describe either Hirschman or Streeten or, in a different way, Arthur Lewis. To them economics has no boundaries and they bring to bear the whole of their human knowledge when considering ex*planations for observed economic phenomena*, or strategies for raising the standard of life.

Going for growth

David Donnison

JANE JACOBS
Cities and the Wealth of Nations
257pp. Viking. £12.95.
0 670 80045 7

The sad history of every academic discipline is that its most enjoyable and widely read books come first. Then, gradually, the trained scholars take over, dividing their subject into narrower and more technical specialisms, writing for smaller and smaller audiences in increasingly incomprehensible jargon, and offering fewer and fewer conclusions which could make the world a better place. (What historian today could *command the kind of audience that* Macaulay or Carlyle had? Which of today's anthropological works could match the style of *The Golden Bough*?) Then, from time to time, there emerges a rogue contributor, determined to acquire a larger vision, to convey it to larger audiences and to draw practical conclusions from it. And the "proper" academics usually turn their backs and exclude these rogues from their reading lists and conferences.

Jane Jacobs is such a rogue. The title of her book warns us that she intends to offer insights and conclusions as far-reaching as Adam Smith did in *The Wealth of Nations*. Dealing with the rise and fall of whole societies, she tramples over territory usually regarded as the separate preserves of specialists in international trade, urban economics, labour markets, fiscal policy, economic history and development economics. Her acknowledgements are brief, her footnotes simple and she offers us no bibliography. She refers to very few economists. One Nobel Prize winner is firmly put down as a "textbook author" and another as having merely developed the ideas of a less famous pioneer.

The book has many of the strengths and the weaknesses you would expect. It deals with profoundly important issues, and is lucidly and wittily written. It proceeds by assertions, studded with vivid illustrations, but lacks any systematic supporting evidence. It is full of fascinating information but has no table of figures. *It contains crashing errors, yet anyone who* gives it serious attention will come away with fresh and thought-provoking ideas.

Jacobs's central argument in *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* will be familiar to anyone who read her previous book, *The Economy of Cities*. The importance of national economies has been greatly exaggerated. Their real motive power lies in their cities. And when cities fail, nations decay. Robust cities grow through five interlocking processes, central to which is "import replacement". As they learn to make for themselves things which they previously bought from other cities, the money they save is used to *import new goods*. The work of the city and the number of workers who do it increase. New technologies are brought to bear, making rural production in the surrounding region more efficient. Some of the older enterprises in the city move out into this region. And the city accumulates more capital for investment which paves the way for further growth. Such cities grow by trading with other "viable" cities, and the regions surrounding them are the most active areas of the nation's economy.

In this book Jacobs develops this argument further to show how such cities are related to other parts of the economy: stagnant and declining regions; "supply *regions*" (often producing one main product) and "transplant regions" (full of branch plants), both of which may be prosperous, but only in a precarious fashion, for neither are replacing their imports. She shows why backward cities need each other, and why trade or aid linking the rich and poor ones are less likely to create the innovative, import-replacing economies which policy makers want. The virtue of this approach is that it concentrates our attention on what actually has to happen to create prosperity. We are given many vivid examples. Sketching the sorry history of Iran, Jacobs comments that the Shah "thought of development as a collection of things for producing, not as a process of change". She gives us many insights into that process.

Jacobs uses her analysis to suggest some of the reasons for the *dramatic growth of city* states like Hong Kong and Singapore, and for the failure of so many Third-World development projects. She also shows why prolonged and heavy military expenditure, into which all empires are ultimately drawn, destroys their cities' capacity to replace imports and thus leads to national economic decay: "the Soviet Union and the United States", she drily remarks, "each predicts . . . the economic decline of the other. Neither will be disappointed."

Yet, despite its eccentric brilliance, the final impression which this book leaves on the mind *is coarse. Growth is the unquestioned aim.* How the fruits of growth are to be distributed, and what kind of fruits are worth having – these questions are not discussed. Welfare and subsidy payments, Jacobs argues, always tend to destroy the economic vigour of cities, and therefore of nations. Like emigrants' remittances, these "unearned" receipts are "transactions of decline". The moralistic undertone of these judgments is never explicit, yet never absent. And the values are crude. We are at no point told that the countries which have been most successful in keeping people at work and preventing poverty and poisonous social con*flict have not been the richest or most rapidly* growing, but those – like Sweden – which have governments that seem to care most about the welfare and unity of their citizens. Since Jacobs must know that, she presumably does not believe these achievements are worth noting. Meanwhile it is the public social services which threaten our economic vigour. Private medical care, private education, private pension schemes and private housing – though they may cost the state more in tax reliefs than publicly funded equivalents which benefit poorer people – seem perfectly acceptable. Margaret Thatcher would warmly approve of *many of the attitudes which run through this* book.

KOMMANDO
German Special Forces of World War II
James Lucas

From the Publishers of WHO DARES WINS
A revealing and fascinating study of the role played by Germany's elite units in World War II.
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Progressively narrower

Gabriel Josipovici

ROBERT FITZGERALD
Enlarging the Change: The Princeton Seminars in Literary Criticism 1949–51
250pp. Boston: Northeastern University Press. $19.95.
0 930350 62 6

In 1949 the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study invited a group of scholars and writers to gather for a series of seminars. These included the poet-critics R. P. Blackmur and John Berryman, native scholars such as Francis Fergusson and Mark Schorer, and European intellectuals who had made America their home, such as René Wellek, Ernst Robert Curtius and Erich Auerbach. All these were to be the guests of the Institute, and they were to be joined by Robert Oppenheimer, the Director and a friend of Fergusson's, as well as by any other scientists who would be willing to attend. Robert Fitzgerald, then a young poet and classicist, was invited to act as the official scribe. For years his notes on the first two years of the seminars lay in the Princeton files, until, not very long ago, a friend asked to see them and immediately realized that they were of more than antiquarian interest. *Enlarging the Change*, a lightly edited version of those records, fully vindicates that belief. It is, sadly, the last book that Robert Fitzgerald published in his lifetime, for this gifted and humane poet, scholar and translator, whose translations of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* are the most beautiful and exciting produced this century, died in January of this year.

The idea behind the seminars was to produce something more than the sum of different views. All the participants, moreover, were men of deep learning and wide sympathies, at home in the culture of Europe from Homer to the present, profoundly aware of the ravages caused to any unified concept of culture by the Second World War and what had led up to it. The choice of participants, and therefore of subjects, was inspired: Auerbach's discussion of Pascal and Baudelaire was set alongside Fergusson's thoughts on the relation of will to form in the middle Cantos of Dante's *Purgatorio* and Fitzgerald's discussion of Aristotle's concept of man in Aristotle's *de Anima*; at the end of two years' work six seminars were devoted to the most considerable novel to have come out of the war, Mann's *Doktor Faustus*.

And yet, as Fitzgerald points out in his marginal comments, the ideal never quite materialized. First of all there was the perennial suspicion in which the men of learning held the makers of art, and of the makers for all attempts at synthesis. Eliot was invited to Princeton but was then made to feel that this was not quite the right place for him (they would have welcomed the world's greatest expert on Dante, Fitzgerald observes, but Dante himself would probably have been too much for them). Berryman, having held back throughout an evening's discussion of Baudelaire, burst out suddenly: "Either I do not understand this poem or there has been a series of violent misconceptions."

Nevertheless there are also enormous advantages to group discussions. It is fascinating to listen in not just on the papers but on the discussions which followed, on Berryman's outburst, on Fergusson trying to persuade the unimpressed Princeton *Dantisti* to see things his way, on Curtius rebuking his old pupil Auerbach for wasting his time on Pascal's theology when he might have come closer to the essence of Pascal by looking at his use of participles. Fitzgerald himself is not backward in acquainting the reader with his views: Schorer's "Eng lit" approach he finds banal; Wellek, despite his massive learning, dry; Maritain, superior to everyone. Indeed, part of the excitement generated by the book depends on the fact that though Fitzgerald takes his duties as scribe very seriously, he is as passionately committed as any Greek chorus.

And though he clearly feels that Maritain's seminars were the high point of the sessions, my own impression is that that claim could better be made for the seminars of Fitzgerald himself and Francis Fergusson. The underlying theme of their rich and subtle discourses could perhaps best be summed up thus: the study of the past is not an antiquarian activity; nor is the past important to us to the degree that it is "relevant". Rather, modern culture has narrowed down our notion of what it means to be human, and only by listening with attention to Sophocles, Thucydides, Aristotle, Dante and Aquinas can one learn again the full range of possibilities open to us. In the light of their comments the earlier remarks of Auerbach on Pascal, Baudelaire and Flaubert, of Wellek on Lessing and Herder, suddenly take on a new significance, and we can appreciate the progressive narrowing of philosophical and literary horizons.

This is perhaps the central message of the Princeton seminars. It seems as important to reiterate it today as it was in the immediate post-war years. And yet there is something about the way it comes across that leaves one slightly uneasy. That unease only really comes to the surface when reading the final set of seminars, those devoted to Mann's *Doktor Faustus*. Apart from Erich Kahler's rather banal defence of the novel, all the members of the seminar are at one in their condemnation of it. Mann is castigated as being provincial, pondérous, pretentious and actually knowing nothing about music.

Of course they are partly right. Stravinsky, meeting Mann while he was at work on the novel, noted in his diary that the man was a dreadful bore, interested only in The Future Of Music. But what is worrying is that the members of the seminar, having said that kind of thing, should feel that they had said enough. As with Alasdair MacIntyre's brilliant *After Virtue*, one is left wondering why the rediscovery of Aristotle should have to entail a blindness to the real thrust of post-Romantic and Modernist art and ideas.

Yet Fergusson can't simply be accused of turning his back on the present. "There may be another reason for my attitude, or feeling", he says,

> namely that I was brought up with other prophets of doom, who caught me young, and hit me where I really lived. I am thinking primarily of Eliot, of course. An early reading of Eliot, like an injection of ragweed, has produced in me a partial immunity . . .
>
> After thirty years I still hear more music, and more of the authentic unheard *mousike* in ["Geronion"] than I do in all the screaming *Weheklage*.

In spite of this, though, I am left feeling that neither Fergusson nor the other members of the seminar even begin to do *Doktor Faustus* justice.

In the end the debate cannot be resolved, not because the questions are difficult but because the issues are so deep that how one responds to them depends on the kinds of choices one has made in one's own life and the kinds of aims for which one is struggling. That is why no "science" of literary criticism is possible or desirable, and why a book like this is both more instructive than a dozen books on literary theory or the future of the novel, and more exciting than a thriller.

Dazzlingly numbing

Chris Baldick

BERNARD SHARRATT
The Literary Labyrinth: Contemporary critical discourses
246pp. Brighton: Harvester. £15.95 (paperback, £6.95).
0 7108 0902 6

Bernard Sharratt's books are designed to review themselves, if only by way of parody or pre-emptive inoculation, so it is best to begin in his own words: "One wishes, even desperately, for disentanglement and elucidation, for a clarity and lucidity of analysis that both the structure and the style of this book seem deliberately to refuse." This is by any standards the most unusual critical book you are likely to find – the most unusual, at least, since Sharratt's earlier *Reading Relations* (1982). It follows a structural principle used by Bob Dylan during the Cuban missile crisis when he composed "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" from the first lines of songs which he feared he would never have time to write. Here too, under the shadow of impending nuclear war some time in the 1990s, Sharratt gives us a medley of unwritten works of criticism, drama, poetry, autobiography and fiction, framed by the ingenious device of the final issue of *New Crisis Quarterly*, a periodical devoted to reviewing imaginary works since nobody who can read full-length reviews bothers any longer to read the books themselves.

If it all sounds like something out of a satirical campus novel, the most tempting explanation is that *The Literary Labyrinth* is a campus novel as much as it is a work of literary criticism. Sharratt's purpose is clearly to dissolve the boundaries between criticism and creation, and above all to break down the authoritative postures of linear critical argument, replacing them with the dramatic, or at least "dialogic" properties of established creative genres. Rather than passively accept a finished critical knowledge of given texts, the reader is invited, or obliged, to assess an unresolved tussle of critical possibilities, all of them, given the spoof-review format, under partial erasure.

In other words, in a work of this kind there is next to nothing to be learned, and much to be explored. Sharratt has applied the modernist principle of "polyphony" to the concerns of post-1968 Marxist cultural politics, and the result is a kind of fairground of forms, styles and issues which is exciting and disorienting in its variety. From parodies of book-reviewing styles, both pompous and baffled, we move to plot-summaries of revolutionary novels and films whose author goes on to invent a political computer game based on Fleet Street circulation wars. There follows a series of autobiographical fragments presented as objective correlatives for an absent subject; a sequence of letters to an embryo; a surprisingly successful rewriting of two of the *Four Quartets* in terms of class struggle; an unashamedly utopian project for do-it-yourself socialist manufacturing workshops; and finally a play made up of debates involving Luther, Cromwell and Trotsky. Even the first half of the book, which is more recognizably literary-critical, is intersected by collections of recent press-cuttings and by excursions into the history of "happiness" and of Athenian balloting procedures.

There are two artfully tangled threads which connect these various parts of *The Literary Labyrinth*. The first is "the politics of time" – from the time taken to read all the doctoral theses on Shakespeare, through the "socially necessary labour time" of Marxian economics, to the necessarily utopian project of imagining future socialist forms of planning. The second thread is that of the dramatic, dialogic or polyphonic principle which informs the book's structure as well as its concerns. Sharratt's discussion of Athenian tragedy as a form of education in democratic political judgment is the most stimulating of his attempted intersections of political and literary theory, and it concludes by advocating a return to "classical" literary study (rhetoric, debating, Greek drama) as a proven form of training for political power.

To follow these combined threads of time and drama is to discover that the beast at the heart of this labyrinth is neither Brecht nor Trotsky but T. S. Eliot. The original title of *The Waste Land* – "He do the Police in different voices" – could well have been adapted for this book: "He do the critic . . ." The problem is not just that the voices of Sharratt's eighteen pseudonymous "contributors" all sound the same, but that the Elliotic strategy of the absent author gives rise to a numbing evasiveness in direct proportion to its dazzling effect. This is a brilliantly inventive exercise in criticism-as-performance, but its genre is that of display, not drama.

Determinedly indeterminate

Chinweizu

HENRY LOUIS GATES (Editor)
Black Literature and Literary Theory
328pp. Methuen. £8.95.
0 416 372 40 6

The title of this collection of essays is slightly misleading; it would have been more honestly rendered as "Black Literature and Structuralist Literary Theory". But that would discourage many readers, since, as one of the contributors has complained elsewhere, structuralism is disregarded in African academic circles as an esoteric European intellectual fad.

There are, of course, good reasons for such disregard, as shown here by one of the contributors, Anthony Appiah, in a commentary on the name Sunday O. Anozie.

His Christian name (what name more Christian?) reflects, in its Englishness, his status as a citizen of the lost British Empire; his family name his Ibo heritage. If I were Derrida, I might, perhaps, add that the 'O' which mediates between the names is a zero, an absence, a nothing – the nothing, in fact, which joins Africa and Europe together.

This Derridian mode of "reading" declares open season to all manner of arbitrariness. And when one considers Mr Anozie's own "reading" of Leopold Senghor's poem "Le Totem", and notes that it includes tables, diagrams, numerological permutations, symbolic representations of syntactic structures etc, one realizes that the products of such "reading" are not for human understanding, but are probably inputs for some giant computer for structuralist research.

There is a small coterie of black critics, in Africa and America, who rhapsodize about texts whose surfaces bristle with syntactic conundrums, semantic riddles, allusions, puns and other indeterminacies that give occasion for arbitrary interpretations. For these disciples of Esu – about whom Mr Gates says: "Esu is the Black Interpreter, the Yoruba god of indeterminacy" – literature is not primarily an exercise in public communication; rather, in keeping with the trickster character of their god, literary texts and utterances are vehicles for mystification and confusion-mongering. Esu's disciples, like Wole Soyinka, claim that "language does not operate simply as communication but as matrices of discrete activities including, of course, those of articulation and meaning". They therefore feel licensed to overemphasize the non-communicative aspect of literary texts.

In literature and in criticism, they prefer to proceed by punning and ellipsis; by syntactic and semantic assaults on grammar; by "shifting the actual intent of language from one matrix and coupling it to another" (Soyinka); by signifying – "a rhetorical practice unengaged in information-giving" (Henry Louis Gates); and generally by "the methodology of oblique references" (Soyinka). Writing, for Esu's disciples, becomes a game of verbal tricks played on the readers; and reading is turned into a game of hermeneutics – the decoding of gratuitously recondite texts.

It is clear from this collection of essays that, attracted by the code-breaking aspects of structuralism, some of Esu's black disciples have become Derridians. They can now apply the pseudo-technical paraphernalia of structuralist theory to their habitual game of making arbitrary interpretations of texts which say (or are presumed to say) what they don't mean, and mean what they don't say. And they can now offer at the high altar of structuralist theory the results of their exercises on works of black literature.

For the ordinary reader and non-structuralist critic, Anthony Appiah's is the only useful essay among the six theoretical essays which form Part One of this collection. One can only wonder why it was included, for it is such a deadly cat among the structuralist pigeons. The seven essays in Part Two (in which structuralist criticism is actually performed on works of black literature) bear out Appiah's complaint that few of the structuralists' comments that are of literary interest depend on the technical apparatus they deploy.

All in all, one wonders if it is not futile to apply the structuralist apparatus to works of black literature which, being directed at a general readership, were not tailored to yield the sort of obscurities that structuralism thrives on.

Bypassing the bigots

Patricia Craig

FRANCES MOLLOY
No Mate for the Magpie
170pp. Virago. £7.95 (paperback, £3.50).
0 860 68 594 2

There is a moment in Muriel Spark's *Loitering with Intent* when the narrator passes an adverse judgment on a novel, written by her ex-lover, in which some Cockney characters appear: "Leslie was so hard pressed for ways in which to express an idiom that he had fallen back on phonetic spelling, always a literary defect in my opinion." It is a soundly based opinion but exceptions can be found. Many Northern Irish writers, for instance, from William Carleton on, have fallen back on phonetic spelling to express local singularity, and some have achieved an admirable downrightness and precision by means of this device. It goes wrong under the direction of a writer like Lynn Doyle, author of *Ballygullion* (1908) and other temporarily popular works, who used an elaborate dialect form to indicate the comical queerness of his characters; once facetiousness takes over, the colloquial turn of phrase loses a good deal of its expressiveness. It tends to work best when it is the instrument, not the subject, of mockery – when it is associated with a sturdy and irreverent cast of mind.

It works splendidly in the hands of Frances Molloy, whose first novel, *No Mate for the Magpie*, deals with growing up undaunted in Co Derry. Ann Elizabeth McGlone, whose early experiences include ghosts, fires and ructions of all kinds, is the wry narrator. Born in 1947, at the top end of a proliferating Catholic family, Ann McGlone (the "Elizabeth" is a legacy from her Protestant grandmother) records with dryness and aplomb the goings-on that keep things ebullient in one neighbourhood after another (the McGlones do a lot of moving about). One council estate acquires the name "Korea" from the fighting, brick-throwing and window-smashing by its rowdy residents. Energetic "Korean" women join forces to batter the breadserver when they stop bandying abuse among themselves. Frances Molloy's narrator, who is quick to pounce on ironies, especially those with a sectarian theme – at one point she describes an Orange procession, marching in defiance of an edict from the Stormont government, passing through her town with a Catholic priest at the head of it – turns her own and her family's vexations into the stuff of comedy, without relinquishing any of the serious feeling that underlies the story. Confronted with bigotry, obtuseness and misguidedness on a scale such as exists in Ann McGlone's locality, the clear-headed can do nothing but resort to laughter.

A night raid by B-Special policemen deprives the McGlones of their father, who is subsequently interned in Crumlin Road Gaol; another move ensues, with the family landing up among neighbours who dislike the proximity of a gaolbird's relations. Overhearing one vigorous piece of backbiting taking place across the garden, Ann and her brother run to their mother with the news that aspersions are being cast on the lot of them; however, "never ye's mine what themins are saying" comes the retort. The unspoken injunction is to make light of aggravation and to stand up for yourself – a policy that Ann, in her sly, spry and humorous way, is very good at carrying out.

A patchy schooling is followed by a job in a pyjama factory, where Ann, for refusing to disclose her religion ("We only allow catholics te sit at this table"), has her hair set on fire with a cigarette-lighter. In a later job she has to contend with bigotry from the other side and has reason to be thankful for "the wee screwed up Protestant face" she was born with. Being a machinist doesn't suit her, but neither does the spell in a convent which comes next ("Before ye go away to be a nun ye have te go te a doctor te have yer head examined te see if ye'r mental . . ."). To list the odd appointments obtained by Ann as the blurb does – the ex-nun becomes a nanny, bacon-slicer and shroud-maker, among other things – suggests the book is going to be tiresomely "characterful" and skittish, which it isn't. Neither are the comparisons of the author with Flann O'Brien and Stevie Smith greatly to the point. Flann O'Brien, in all his guises, is nothing if not erudite, and it shows; and whereas Stevie Smith, in her *Novel on Yellow Paper*, chatters and shows off and poses, albeit with considerable perspicacity and charm, Frances Molloy confines herself to the plain, sardonic accents of Co Derry, and to everyday events.

No Mate for the Magpie, though, extends the scope of the vernacular approach, as well as making short work of cant, intolerance and foolishness. Towards the end of the book, which coincides with civil rights agitation in the North of Ireland, political matters receive some coverage: when the famous interruption of a peaceful march takes place at Burntollet Bridge, Ann McGlone is there is the thick of it, dodging Paisleyite crowbars and picks. She is among the survivors ("the wans of us that were still able to walk or limp") who make it to Derry. Not long after this she sets off for Dublin and a new, if brief, set of lively experiences, at the end of which is the Holyhead boat and the journey to "a place where life resembled life more than it did here". Such a departure is not exactly unprecedented, and Frances Molloy is unpretentiously aware of the tradition she is continuing. To this thoroughly unliterary novel is prefixed a quotation from Yeats ("Out of Ireland have we come . . . "), and it ends by invoking Joyce ("a . . . foun' mesel' standin' over chattering waters on O'Connell Bridge"). What it amounts to – apart from circumventing the risk involved in its continuous use of dialect – is a celebration of gumption and hilarity.

Short histories

DAVID NEVIN
Dream West
639pp. New English Library. £9.95.
0 450 06078 0

The story of John Charles Frémont of the United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, who mapped most of the American West for the first time, was court-martialled for disobeying orders during the rebellion that led to California's independence from Mexico, became a millionaire when gold was discovered on his land, unsuccessfully ran for president, served as a general during the Civil War, and finally died in poverty after losing his fortune, could easily have turned into soap opera in the wrong hands. David Nevin's massive novel, however, deftly utilizes the eight years of research done by the author and offers wholly credible portraits of both Frémont and his remarkable wife Jessie. A true labour of love and a very impressive début.

NIGEL TRANTER
The Riven Realm
352pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £8.95.
0 340 33721 4

The prolific Nigel Tranter's latest novel, which is evidently the first volume of a trilogy, deals with the power struggle between the Scottish nobles and the machinations of England and France following the death of James IV at the Battle of Flodden and the succession to the throne of his seventeen-month-old son. The cast includes everyone who was anyone at the time, but the main character is the poet David Lindsay who, caught in the thick of events as tutor to the infant king, still manages to find the time to court and marry his attractive cousin Kate. Vivid and enjoyable.

CLAIRE HUNTER
Fiercely, the Tempest
296pp. Shaftesbury: Longstone Press. £8.95.
0 950 75261 4

Claire Hunter's second novel about the Dainton family of the Island of Portland follows the fortunes of George Dainton and his wife Frances during the last two decades of the eighteenth century, moving from Yorktown, where George is one of Cornwallis's aides-de-camp, to Portland to India and back to Portland. The story is rather melodramatic, but the characters are attractive and the interweaving of local and national history is very skilfully done.

Savkar Altinel

At the edge of the ice

Colin Greenland

BRIAN W. ALDISS
Helliconia Winter
281pp. Cape. £8.95.
0 224 01847 7

"Such was the nature of grass that it continued to grow despite the wind." The essence of Brian Aldiss's Helliconia trilogy is there already, in the first sentence of the first chapter of this last volume: fatalism, fundamentality, the brute biology of it all. Everything comes back to nature, which endures. On the world with two suns the Great Year is two dozen terrestrial centuries long, and every Great Winter is an ice age. Helliconian civilization withers towards decay. Not that there is anything sere or shrunken about Aldiss's account of it. Indeed, though science fiction often has this scope, it has never had this grandeur.

Grandeur has to do with more than size. Cultural values and emotional responses are bound up in it. For *Helliconia Spring* Aldiss devised a story generations long, from nomads through pioneers and settlers to traders, which was entirely fitting as a way to establish an epic, but sometimes obliged him to write a pageant of history, distancing us from the people who are its components. For *Helliconia Summer* he dropped the scale to half a year, letting his characters bulk more largely, as they do in their own estimation, while the story of their world went on around and between them, in what they discovered and what they took for granted – a more difficult approach, since it involved creating the epic by means of the novel, but one which was more congenial to the warmth and immediacy of Aldiss's imagination. Wisely he has retained this method for the third book. The action is international, the scenery sometimes colossal, but the people are all actual size. Grandeur is not aloofness.

Helliconia Winter begins and ends in the mountain fastness of Kharnabar in Sibornal, on the northern polar circle, where the encroaching ice makes its imminence felt first. Kharnabar is dominated by the Great Wheel, an extraordinary and appalling subterranean treadmill which Piranesi would have much admired. Seeking advancement, Luterin Shokerandit, son of the Keeper of the Great Wheel, goes south to a commission in the army holding the frontier against the forces of Pannoval and Borldoran. In battle Shokerandit kills the Borldoranian commander and captures his widow, Toress Lahl, a doctor and biologist. Meanwhile the unseen Oligarch of Sibornal arranges a treacherous reception for his returning army. Shokerandit and his captive escape only with the help of Harbin Fashnalgid, a deserting captain from the ambushing force. For these three exiles, nothing is now as they have ever known it. Their experience exemplifies the savage closure of another human epoch on Helliconia.

Aldiss rises majestically to this romance of imperial twilight. *Helliconia Winter* is a tale of magnificent grimness, of institutionalized cruelty, fateful coincidences, and conflicts of desire and duty. It bristles with thick furs and handlebar moustaches, plague-ships and desperate sleigh-rides. Helliconia is a world denied modernity. Its "bedizened dignitaries" obliterate the scientific findings of the Spring and Summer epochs to preserve an older heritage of fear. Even without their folly, there would be no way to resist the Winter. The wind will blow; yet, we understand, there will be grass, and one day, centuries ahead, another Spring. "Life", says Fashnaligid, "is essentially a series of repeat performances." He does not know how vastly true his laconic aphorism is.

Aldiss echoes the theme with italicized passages describing disasters on the orbital observatory, and the destruction and subsequent recovery of Earth; but these seem like a dissonant dream, almost trivial beside the main drama. Nor is his reading of James Lovelock's *Gaia* fully integrated. The book would have been emphatic enough without these marginalia, but it is a measure of its conviction that they scarcely intrude.

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Imperilled peoples

R. D. Martin

ROBIN HANBURY-TENISON
Worlds Apart
227pp. Granada. £10.95.
0 246 123826

Robin Hanbury-Tenison, who divides his time between hill-farming in Cornwall and exploration, has already written several books about his expeditions, but *Worlds Apart* covers the entire story in an autobiographical survey. In all, he has undertaken more than a dozen major expeditions through both rain-forests and deserts in South America, Africa, Asia and South-East Asia, and gives us here a lively, entertaining account of them. But the book not only tells of the thrill of discovery in strange, challenging environments; it also highlights the tragic destruction that everywhere accompanies the expansion of industrialized society, and documents the founding of Survival International to assist isolated tribes now under threat.

Hanbury-Tenison was the youngest of five children and grew up on the family estate in central Ireland, where his taste for exploration was developed at a tender age on a small island that served as an ideal adventure playground. After Eton, he went on to read Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Magdalen College, Oxford, and was originally intended for an army career, though a spell of army training during his first long vacation put paid to that plan. Instead, he became an explorer; but the author strongly hints that his schooling at one of England's "medieval torture chambers" and his one exposure to army training helped considerably by bestowing a comparatively picnic-like quality on the most demanding of his subsequent expeditions. In any event, he proved to be well-suited to life as a traveller in seemingly hostile environments, rapidly learning to adapt to local conditions, rather than fighting them, and benefiting from a number of special gifts, including an apparent immunity from insect bites. Amazingly, he seems not to have suffered any major illness in the course of his travels.

Between his first expedition, an overland trip to Ceylon in a jeep, and his second, to South America, Hanbury-Tenison got engaged to a remarkably understanding woman, Marika, who subsequently became his wife. Until her tragic death from cancer in 1982, she combined a successful career as a cookery writer with active participation in several of her husband's expeditions. As a rule, he travelled with very few companions and sometimes completely alone. Thus it was that he crossed South America from east to west with Richard Mason, a friend from Oxford days, in the first Brazilian-built jeep. Soon afterwards, he travelled through the continent from north to south by inflatable rubber dinghy, setting out with Sebastian Snow and then carrying on alone when his companion became too ill to continue. He has occasionally joined major expeditions, however, most notably when acting as leader of the Royal Geographical Society expedition to Sarawak, involving some 140 scientists over a period of eighteen months.

In the course of his expeditions, Hanbury-Tenison gradually developed a consuming interest in rain-forest environments and in the isolated human populations that inhabit them. Throughout the world, such populations are now subject to alarming pressures, if not the immediate threat of annihilation, in the name of progress. Commonly, drastic change is a simple result of human greed, but the author also feels that missionaries have generally done more harm than good (though he notes a number of conspicuous exceptions among Catholic missionaries and reserves his harshest criticism for the American fundamentalist kind). In all cases, whether as a result of economic exploitation or as an unintentional outcome of religious imperialism, the worst effects for isolated tribal societies result from loss of self-confidence. This, sadly, is occurring in many such societies and Hanbury-Tenison's increasing concern about it crystallized in the course of a hovercraft expedition in Amazonia, when he teamed up with the ethnobotanist Conrad Gorinsky. Together, they founded Survival International, an organization dedicated to the cause of isolated tribal populations such as the Brazilian Indians. Survival International can already claim a number of successes, but it is facing an uphill battle on all fronts. Financially, it can only carry its substantial overdraft against the security of Hanbury-Tenison's farm, while politically the struggle is unending. It has just been reported that the Waimiri-Atroari Indians in Brazilian Amazonia, reduced from 3,000 to 800 over the past twenty years, are now menaced by a proposal to use herbicides to clear their tribal lands to make way for a new hydroelectric dam.

Worlds Apart deserves to be very widely read, not least because part of the royalties will go to Survival International and thus contribute to a most worthy cause.

"Die unbewegliche Reise", 1969, reproduced from Roland Topor's Topor Tod und Teufel *(253pp. Zürich: Diogenes, 3 257 02009 0).*

Moving house

Colin Thubron

LAURENS VAN DER POST and JANE TAYLOR
Testament to the Bushmen
176pp. Viking. £12.95.
0 670 80065 1

For *Testament to the Bushmen* – the title not only of Laurens van der Post's and Jane Taylor's book but of their six-part television series – Miss Taylor travelled largely in Botswana and Namibia, encountering semi-nomadic or newly settled Bushmen from the Kalahari Desert, where fewer than a thousand maintain their ancient way of life. The bulk of the book is hers – an account of the Bushmen as they were and as they are now, with intimations about what they will become. To this Sir Laurens adds a fifty-page postlude, an extended meditation on the significance of these endearing people in his spiritual life and the lesson they hold for mankind.

Miss Taylor is at her best when describing those facets of the Bushmen's world which lay farthest from her experience when she filmed them. She relates their history with lucid economy. She is interesting on their beliefs and rock-paintings, the role of women and the place of children. But whenever she tries to exploit the incidents captured on location and to picture specific Bushmen groups in camp, in dance or in hunting, her account becomes wooden and episodic. Such moments are better caught by her forty-eight pages of handsome colour photographs.

The people she describes are humorous, democratic, chattery, intelligent and individualistic. But her most sad and telling chapter charts their present decline. The Kalahari Desert is being invaded by both black and white farmers, and the Bushmen's historic hunting-grounds are being eaten away. The roots and tubers which they gathered have become scarcer, and in a world of tragically depleted game most Bushmen have become trappers rather than gatherers or hunters with the bow, while others have degenerated into part-time drovers, poorly paid farm-hands, squatters or thieves. The demands and laws of modern life are deeply alien to them. They have few feelings either of ownership or of responsibility, whether to a vegetable garden or to a herd of goats. Under them, individual possessions decay. They are used to sharing. Now alcohol, TB and syphilis have arrived. The Bushmen's bows and arrows are more likely to be made for tourists than for the hunt, and the tribal medicine-men ask cash payments for their services. The Bushmen, as Taylor says, are still moving house. "They have left the old house, but have still not found a suitable new one. In the meantime all their goods, both physical and spiritual, are in a state of utter disarray." No wonder they have come to think of themselves as the race lowest in God's favour.

It would doubtless amaze the easy-going people of Taylor's workmanlike chapters if they knew of their elevation, at the end of this book, to the status of Noble Savage. This patrician aboriginal, in van der Post's mind, is subtler than his Rousseau-esque ancestor. His is noble less because of an overt spiritual stature or innocence than because of his closeness to the psychic roots of mankind, to the Jungian collective unconscious, to natural ways of being from which so-called civilized men are in lonely exile.

It is van der Post's way, as Jane Taylor writes, "to transform an individual glimpse into a universal perception", but sometimes one wishes he didn't. He has contributed so much and so uniquely in his books that it seems ungrateful to conclude that his long soliloquy on "the fermentation of Bushman yeast in my own spirit" verges on the pretentious. He seems to have apotheosized the Bushmen into the touchstone of all civilization, and the reader may wonder fleetingly whether these are the same people of whom Taylor observes uneasily that they almost never show one another affection.

Van der Post's thesis is, of course, honourable and sympathetic. But in it he adopts the stance of initiate and teacher, with something of the self-righteousness which that suggests. The sage's mantle weighs heavier on him than it did in his remarkable *The Lost World of the Kalahari*, and despite his new essay's distinction of mind and frequent beauty of writing, I must confess to preferring, in the end, the unadorned testament of Taylor.

Landmarks and landmines

Stanley Uys

MICHAEL NICHOLSON
Across the Limpopo: A family's hazardous 4,000 mile journey through Africa
219pp. Robson. £8.95.
0 86051 304 1

It was almost the epic Cape-to-Cairo run: Johannesburg-to-Cairo, actually, and then on to Southampton. It took nearly six months and they covered 14,000 miles. Michael Nicholson and his family could have flown, of course, but then, as he observes, they would not have traversed eight African and Arab countries and four European ones, nor would they have seen the Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe Ruins, Ngorongoro crater, Serengeti, Blue and White Niles, Tutankhamun's Tomb and all the other wonders. So in 1981 they bumped and lurched their way northwards, negotiating boulders, torrents and sandstorms, camping with wild game almost breathing into their tents, dodging Masai spears and always chancing their luck.

Nicholson himself had been to most of these places before, as, in his publisher's words, "one of the world's most travelled and decorated foreign correspondents, having covered more wars than any other correspondent of any news network". He had just completed a four-year stint for ITN in South Africa and was being summoned back to London. He, his wife Diana and their sons Tom, nine, and William, eight, decided they could not exchange "bright African sunshine for grey English drizzle" overnight, so they eased themselves into the changover over almost half a year.

"We could not make that journey again", writes Nicholson.

Africa is closing in on itself and the borders that were open are not so easily crossed today. Roads that were free to traffic then are now closed .... By good chance, and it was nothing short of that, we escaped disaster and possibly death in both Zimbabwe and Sudan. No one should expect that luck today. Sandstorms and floods, ripped tyres and aggressive tribesmen, quagmire and quicksand, heat and thirst, lion, elephant, cobra and scorpion are not the most dangerous hazards for today's Africa overlanders. Patience and care, good fortune and good sense, enthusiasm and an occasional drop of sherry will see the intrepid adventurer through, but he has no protection whatsoever against the land-mine, the grenade and the Kalashnikov automatic rifle, which together represent so much of that sad and beautiful continent today – its grim record of coup and conflict.

Nicholson has written a very readable book, full of the trained journalist's sharp observations and newsworthy stories, and revealing also a keen sensitivity to Africa's colours and smells, a considerable – at times almost poetic – feeling for words, and a powerful dislike of the ivory poachers and others who are making animal conservation in East Africa such a heartbreaking struggle. Nicholson's descriptions of the poachers at work are laconic, but disturbing, and he puts a share of the blame on the governments, because "they are content to do nothing to stop it". At Serengeti, he claims, about 50,000 animals are poached every year.

Yet somehow Nicholson, even when he is obviously angry, maintains his detachment, a non-involvement either with the landscape or the people or the animals. Even when he describes how the notorious "Boss" Lilford in UDI Rhodesia paid an ex-British paratrooper $500 for every ear he cut off a (dead) black poacher, it is only through brief flashes of mordant wit that he reveals his feelings.

On the other hand, he explains with engaging frankness the spirit in which he approached his great trek up Africa. "I had been determined", he writes, "that, from the moment we left Johannesburg, I would shed – like a snake sheds his dead skin – the journalist's chronic cynicism which might have spoilt the trip for me and my family. We were tourists and we were going to do those tourist things . . . ". And although there are limits to the air of innocence a seasoned foreign correspondent can maintain, Nicholson has succeeded.

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Underfoot understanding

Jon Thompson

E. GANS-RUEDIN
Indian Carpets
318pp. Thames and Hudson. £45.
0 500 23418 3
ELENA TZAREVA
Rugs and Carpets from Central Asia
223pp. Allen Lane. £30.
0 7139 1504 8
DAVID TSITSISHVILI, LIATIF KERIMOV, NONNA STEPANIAN AND TATYANA GRIGOLIYA
Rugs and Carpets from the Caucasus: The Russian collections
Unnumbered pages with colour photographs.
Allen Lane. £25.
0 7139 1505 6

The foundations for the present understanding of carpets were laid by W. von Bode, E. Kühnel and K. Erdmann in pre-war Germany. After Erdmann's death in 1964 the field was deserted by professional academicians until quite recently, leaving a handful of independent scholars and scientists to continue the study of its many complex problems. Shortage of expertise has been no impediment to the publication of books on the subject, however. In the last twenty years most have been written (and many published) by carpet dealers grateful for the publicity and prestige which authorship confers. The success of the popular series of books covering the main carpet weaving areas, published by Thames and Hudson, prompted Indian officials concerned with the promotion of their handloom industries to press E. Gans-Reudin, a Swiss dealer, to come out of retirement and write *Indian Carpets*, the first large-scale work on the subject to be published since the early years of this century. After a brief history of India, an enticing touristic section and an interesting technical chapter, the main part of the book is devoted to the carpets themselves, of which, however, two-thirds are modern and one-third from the seventeenth century – some published in colour for the first time.

To write about seventeenth-century Mughal carpets is to become involved in that most interesting puzzle – the origin of the so-called Indo-Persian carpets. Large numbers of seventeenth-century carpets survive in Europe, notably in Dutch and Portugese collections, which in style belong to the art of Persia but should, according to the evidence of circumstance, come from India. Gans-Reudin states that a particular "Indo-Persian" carpet was woven for the then Maharajah of Jaipur in 1625 at Herat, "according to the records of the City Palace Museum in Jaipur". The seventeenth-century inventories written in Dhundhari using the Nagari script contain vital information for students of Indian textile history, but they remain unresearched and unpublished. What they actually record, on preliminary translation, is that some of the Indo-Persian carpets are described as "velayati", a word meaning "foreign". At the time this would have meant from beyond the western frontier, in other words Persia, Khurasan and Transoxania. Gans-Reudin claims that the carpet in question must be Indian because Herat (the capital of Khurasan) was part of India at the time; a statement as ingenious as it is wrong. Herat was never ruled from India. It was part of Persia both politically and culturally, becoming part of Afghanistan only in the mid-nineteenth century. Much that he writes about the older pieces is equally shaky, and the quality of ideas and information in the book as a whole is no match for that of the illustrations which are uniformly excellent.

Elena Tzareva's *Rugs and Carpets from Central Asia* is a serious work. Some of the earliest documented central Asian material is that collected by A. Bogolyubov and published by him in 1908. Since then many new ideas have come into circulation, the most important being the necessity of using technical as well as stylistic features in any system for the classification of tribal weavings. Tzareva is fully conversant with contemporary ideas, Russian and Western, and gives the first scholarly account of central Asian carpets in the four main Russian collections, including an unknown and long-forgotten hoard in the Russian Museum, Leningrad. Much of the material is without parallel in collections outside Russia. Particularly welcome is the republication, with appropriate technical information, of pieces from the Bogolyubov collection. Tzareva's approach is rigorous (the bibliography is excellent) and her style austere, even ascetic. She permits herself no discussion, subjective comment or background information on any of the pieces, even the date of acquisition; their fascinating history is only hinted at on the dust-jacket. Doubtless restraint is better than indulgence and in spite of its curiously uneven colour-quality her book will become a standard work in the field.

Rugs and Carpets of the Caucasus: The Russian collections has an interesting section on Georgian carpets which gives new insights into little-known material. The carpets from Daghestan, Armenia and Azerbaijan are more familiar since they are typical of the goods traded to the West over the last hundred years. All are described in a mass of detail using a plethora of new terms. Initial confusion gives way to an impression that this could be one of those rare sources of definitive information; however, a more careful look reveals a complete oblivion of the last fifty years of carpet studies and exposes so many internal inconsistencies that credibility is likely to be its problem.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Chris Baldick is the author of *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848–1932*, 1983.

Joseph Brodsky's collection of poems, *A Part of Speech*, was published in 1980.

Gordon Brotherston's books include *Image of the New World: The American continent portrayed in native texts*, 1979.

A. S. Byatt's new novel, *Still Life*, will be published later this year.

Lord Carver's most recent book is *The Seven Ages of the British Army*, 1984.

Chinweizu is the Economy and Business Editor of the Lagos *Guardian*, and co-author of *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature*, 1980.

Patricia Craig is working on a study of Northern Irish poetry and fiction.

Michael Davie was the Editor of the *Melbourne Age* from 1979 until 1981.

David Donnison is Professor of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Glasgow.

Walter Elkan is Professor of Economics at Brunel University.

James Fenton was a freelance correspondent between 1973 and 1975 in Cambodia and Vietnam.

Roy Fuller's *New and Collected Poems 1934–84* will be published next month.

Colin Greenland's first novel, *Daybreak on a Different Mountain*, was published last year.

Robert Hewison's edition of John Ruskin's *Catalogue of the Rudimentary Series* was published earlier this year.

Peter Heyworth is working on the biography *Otto Klemperer*, the first volume of which was published in 1983

Margaret Higonnet teaches Comparative Literature at the University of Connecticut.

Patrice Higonnet is the Robert Walton Goelet Professor of French History at Harvard University.

Harold Hobson's *Theatre in Britain: A personal view* was published last year.

Robert Irwin's *History of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria* will appear later this year.

Jonathan Israel's books include *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World, 1606–1661*, 1982.

Gabriel Josipovici's *Writing and the Body* was published in 1982.

John Keegan's *Six Armies in Normandy* appeared in 1982.

Donald Keene's books include *Travels in Japan*, 1981.

Paul Kennedy is Dilworth Professor of History at Yale University and his most recent book is *Strategy and Diplomacy 1870–1945*, 1983.

Stephen Lloyd is the author of *H. Balfour Gardiner*, 1984.

Leslie A. Marchand is the editor of *Byron's Letters and Journals*, in twelve volumes 1973–82.

Michael R. Marrus is co-author of *Vichy France and the Jews*, 1982.

R. D. Martin edited *The Study of Prosimian Behaviour*, 1979.

William Mostyn-Owen, formerly assistant to Bernard Berenson, is a Director of the Old Master Department at Christies.

William V. O'Brien's *The Conduct of Just and Limited War* was published in 1981.

Patrick O'Connor works for *Harpers and Queen*.

Stanley G. Payne's most recent book is *Spanish Catholicism: An historical overview*, 1984.

Marcia Pointon is the author of *William Dyce 1806–1864: A critical biography*, 1979.

Keith Robbins's books include *The Eclipse of a Great Power: Modern Britain 1870–1975*, 1983.

William St Clair's *Lord Elgin and the Marbles* was republished last year.

W. A. Speck is Professor of Modern History at the University of Leeds.

J. P. Stern is Professor of German at University College London.

John Strawson's *A History of the SAS Regiment* was reviewed in the *TLS* in March.

Jon Thompson is the author of *Carpet Magic*, 1983.

Colin Thubron's most recent travel book, *Among the Russians*, was published in 1983.

John Turner's *Lloyd George's Secretariat* was published in 1980.

Stanley Uys is the London Editor of the South African Morning Group of Newspapers.

Philip Windsor is Reader in International Relations at the London School of Economics.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 226
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than June 7. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 226" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on June 14.

1 Donald the Highlander, billeted in the Flemish farmhouse, rocked the baby's cradle, while Jean and Jeanette were out getting in the hay. As our painters are bent on military subjects just now, I throw this out as a good subject for the pencil to illustrate the principle of an honest English war.

2 Nature hath that emptiness,
Allows of penetration less
And therefore must make room
Where greater spirits come.

What field of all the Civil Wars,
Where his were not the deepest scars?

3 'And everybody praised the Duke,
Who this great fight did win.'
'But what good came of it at last?'
Quoth little Peterkin.
'Why that I cannot tell', said he,
'But 'twas a famous victory'.

Competition No 222
Winner: Philip Hobsbaum
Answers:
1 He snatched the automatic out of the case and shot the Minister twice in the back.

The Minister fell across the oil stove; the saucepan upset and the two eggs broke on the floor. Raven shot the Minister once more in the head, leaning across the desk to make quite certain, driving the bullet hard into the base of the skull, smashing it open like a china doll's.

Graham Greene, *A Gun for Sale*, chapter 1.

2 A shapeless figure bent over him; he smelt the fresh leather of the revolver belt; but what insignia did the figure wear on the sleeves and shoulder-straps of its uniform – and in whose name did it raise the dark pistol barrel?

Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, part 4 "The Grammatical Fiction".

3 Crack of a startling pistol. Jean Jaurès dies in a wine puddle. Who or what stares through the café-window creped in powder-smoke?

Geoffrey Hill, *The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy*.

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In our issue of April 12 we unaccountably described Neal Ascherson as the Editor of *The Scotsman*. We are sorry for this mistake. The Editor of *The Scotsman* is Eric B. Mackay; Mr Ascherson, who at various times has worked for the paper, now writes a column for the *Observer*, and is the author of *The Polish August* (1982) and, with Isabel Hilton and Magnus Linklater, of *The Fourth Reich: Klaus Barbie and the Neo-Fascist Connection* (1985), which will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.